THE MASTER ROGUE

By

DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS

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THE MASTER ROGUE

OTHER BOOKS BY
DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS

The Great God Success, *Her Serene Highness*
A Woman Ventures
Golden Fleece

"The razor cut me and dropped to the floor."

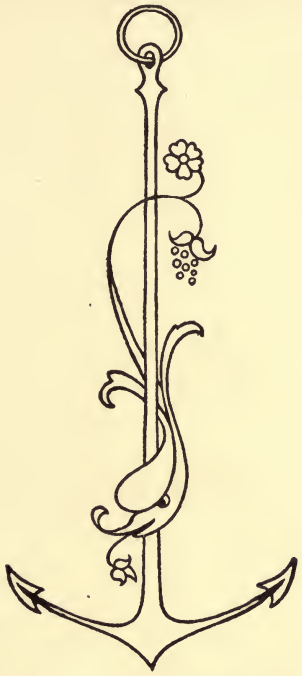
THE MASTER-ROGUE

The Confessions of a Crœsus

By

David Graham Phillips

Illustrated by Gordon H. Grant



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THE MASTER ROGUE

I

I cannot remember the time when I was not absolutely certain that I would be a millionaire. And I had not been a week in the big wholesale dry-goods house in Worth Street in which I made my New York start, before I looked round and said to myself: "I shall be sole proprietor here some day."

Probably clerks dream the same thing every day in every establishment on earth—but I didn't dream; I *knew*. From earliest boyhood I had seen that the millionaire was the only citizen universally envied, honoured, and looked up to. I wanted to be in the first class, and I knew I had only to stick to my ambition and to think of nothing else and to let nothing stand in the way of it. There are so few men capable of forming a definite, serious pur-

pose, and of persisting in it, that those who are find the road almost empty before they have gone far.

By the time I was thirty-three years old I had arrived at the place where the crowd is pretty well thinned out. I was what is called a successful man. I was general manager of the dry-goods house at ten thousand a year—a huge salary for those days. I had nearly sixty thousand dollars put by in gilt-edged securities. I had built a valuable reputation for knowing my business and keeping my word. I owned a twenty-five-foot brownstone house in a side street not far from Madison Avenue, and in it I had a comfortable, happy, old-fashioned home. At thirty-two I had gone back to my native town to marry a girl there, one of those women who have ambition beyond gadding all the time and spending every cent their husbands earn, and who

know how to make home attractive to husband and children.

I couldn't exaggerate the value of my family, especially my wife, to me in those early days. True, I should have gone just as far without them, but they made my life cheerful and comfortable; and, now that sentiment of that narrow kind is all in the past, it's most agreeable occasionally to look back on those days and sentimentalise a little.

That I worked intelligently, as well as hard, is shown by the fact that I was made junior partner at thirty-eight. My partner—there were only two of us—was then an elderly man and the head of the old and prominent New York family of Judson—that is not the real name, of course. Ours was the typical old-fashioned firm, doing business on principles of politeness rather than of strict business. One of its iron-clad customs was that the senior

partner should retire at sixty. Mr. Judson's intention was to retire in about five years, I to become the head of the firm, though with the smaller interest, and one of his grandsons to become the larger partner, though with the lesser control—at least, for a term of years.

It was called evidence of great friendship and confidence that Mr. Judson thus "favoured" me. Probably this notion would have been stronger had it been known on what moderate terms and at what an easy price he let me have the fourth interest. No doubt Mr. Judson himself thought he was most generous. But I knew better. There was no sentimentality about my ideas of business, and my experience has been that there isn't about any one's when you cut through surface courtesy and cant and get down to the real facts. I knew I had earned every step of my promo-

tion from a clerk; and, while Mr. Judson might have selected some one else as a partner, he wouldn't have done so, because he needed me. I had seen to that in my sixteen years of service there.

Judson wasn't a self-made man, as I was. He had inherited his share in the business, and a considerable fortune, besides. The reason he was so anxious to have me as a partner was that for six years I had carried all his business cares, even his private affairs. Yes, he needed me—though, no doubt, in a sense, he was my friend. Who wouldn't have been my friend under the circumstances? But, having looked out for his own interest and comfort in selecting me, why should he have expected that I wouldn't look out for mine? The only kind of loyalty a man who wishes to do something in the world should give or expect is the mutual loyalty of common interest.

I confess I never liked Judson. To be quite frank, from the first day I came into that house, I envied him. I used to think it was contempt; but, since my own position has changed, I know it was envy. I remember that the first time I saw him I noted his handsome, carefully dressed figure, so out of place among the sweat and shirt-sleeves and the litter of goods and packing cases, and I asked one of my fellow-clerks: "Who's that fop?" When he told me it was the son of the proprietor, and my prospective chief boss, I said to myself: "It won't be hard to get *you* out of the way;" for I had brought from the country the prejudice that fine clothes and fine manners proclaim the noddle-pate.

I envied my friend—for, in a master-and-servant way, that was highly, though, of course, secretly distasteful to me, we became friends. I envied him his education, his in-

herited wealth, his manners, his aristocratic appearance, and, finally, his social position. It seemed to me that none of these things that he had and I hadn't belonged of right to him, because he hadn't earned them. It seemed to me that his having them was an outrageous injustice to me.

I think I must have hated him. Yes, I did hate him. How is it possible for a man who feels that he is born to rule not to hate those whom blind fate has put as obstacles in his way? To get what you want in this world you must be a good hater. The best haters make the best grabbers, and this is a world of grab, not of "By your leave," or "If you'll permit me, sir." You can't get what you want away from the man who's got it unless you hate him. Gentle feelings paralyse the conquering arm.

So, at thirty-eight, it seemed to be settled

that I was to be a respectable Worth Street merchant, in active life until I should be sixty, always under the shadow of the great Judson family, and thereafter a respectable retired merchant and substantial citizen with five hundred thousand dollars or thereabouts. But it never entered my head to submit to that sort of decree of destiny, dooming me to respectable obscurity. Nature intended me for larger things.

The key to my true destiny, as I had seen for several years, was the possession of a large sum of money—a million dollars. Without it, I must work on at my past intolerably slow pace. With it, I could leap at once into my kingdom. But, how get it? In the regular course of any business conducted on proper lines, such a sum, even to-day, rewards the successful man starting from nothing only when the vigour of youth is gone and the hab-

its of conservatism and routine are fixed. I knew I must get my million not in driblets, not after years of toil, but at once, in a lump sum. I must get it even at some temporary sacrifice of principle, if necessary.

If I had not seen the opportunity to get it through Judson and Company, I should have retired from that house years before I got the partnership. But I did see it there, saw it coming even before I was general manager, saw it the first time I got a peep into the private affairs of Mr. Judson.

Judson and Company, like all old-established houses, was honeycombed with carelessness and wastefulness. To begin with, it treated its employees on a basis of mixed business and benevolence, and that is always bad unless the benevolence is merely an ingenious pretext for getting out of your people work that you don't pay for. But Mr.

Judson, having a good deal of the highfaluting *grand seigneur* about him, made the benevolence genuine. Then, the theory was that the Judsons were born merchants, and knew all there was to be known, and did not need to attend to business. Mr. Judson, being firmly convinced of his greatness, and being much engaged socially and in posing as a great merchant at luncheons and receptions to distinguished strangers and the like, put me in full control as soon as he made me general manager. He interfered in the business only occasionally, and then merely to show how large and generous he was—to raise salaries, to extend unwise credits, to bolster up decaying mills that had long sold goods to the house, to indorse for his friends. Friends! Who that can and will lend and indorse has not hosts of friends? What I have waited to see before selecting my friends is the friendship

that survives the death of its hopes of favours —and I'm still waiting.

As soon as I became partner I confirmed in detail the suspicion, or, rather, the instinctive knowledge, which had kept me from looking elsewhere for my opportunity.

I recall distinctly the day my crisis came. It had two principal events.

The first was my discovery that Mr. Judson had got the firm and himself so entangled that he was in my power. I confess my impulse was to take a course which a weaker or less courageous man would have taken — away from the course of the strong man with the higher ambition and the broader view of life and morals. And it was while I seemed to be wavering—I say "seemed to be" because I do not think a strong, far-sighted man of resolute purpose is ever "squeamish," as they call it—while, I say, I was in the mood of uncer-

tainty which often precedes energetic action, we, my wife and I, went to dinner at the Judsons.

That dinner was the second event of my crucial day. Judson's family and mine did not move in the same social circle. When people asked my wife if she knew Mrs. Judson—which they often maliciously did—she always answered: "Oh, no—my husband keeps our home life and his business distinct; and, you know, New York is very large. The Judsons and we haven't the same friends." That was her way of hiding our rankling wound—for it rankled with me as much as with her; in those days we had everything in common, like the humble people that we were.

I can see now her expression of elation as she displayed the note of invitation from Mrs. Judson: "It would give us great pleasure if you and your husband would dine with us

quite informally," etc. Her face clouded as she repeated, "quite informally." "They wouldn't for worlds have any of their fashionable friends there to meet us." Even then she was far away from the time when, to my saying, "You shall have your victoria and drive in the park and get your name in the papers like Mrs. Judson," she laughed and answered—honestly, I know—"We mustn't get to be like these New Yorkers. Our happiness lies right here with ourselves and our children. I'll be satisfied if we bring them up to be honest, useful men and women." That's the way a woman should talk and feel. When they get the ideas that are fit only for men everything goes to pot.

But to return to the Judson dinner—my wife and I had never before been in so grand a house. It was, indeed, a grand house for those days, though it wouldn't compare with

my palace overlooking the park, and would hardly rank to-day as a second-rate New York house. We tried to seem at our ease, and I think my wife succeeded; but it seemed to me that Judson and his wife were seeing into my embarrassment and were enjoying it as evidence of their superiority. I may have wronged him. Possibly I was seeking more reasons to hate him in order the better to justify myself for what I was about to do. But that isn't important.

My wife and I were as if in a dream or a daze. A whole, new world was opening to both of us—the world of fashion, luxury, and display. True, we had seen it from the outside before; and had had it constantly before our eyes; but now we were touching it, tasting it, smelling it—were almost grasping it. We were unhappy as we drove home in our ill-smelling public cab, and when we re-

entered our little world it seemed humble and narrow and mean—a ridiculous fool's paradise.

We did not have our customary before-going-to-sleep talk that night, about my business, about our investments, about the household, about the children—we had two, the boys, then. We lay side by side, silent and depressed. I heard her sigh several times, but I did not ask her why—I understood. Finally I said to her: "Minnie, how'd you like to live like the Judsons? You know we can afford to spread out a good deal. Things have been coming our way for twelve years, and soon——"

She sighed again. "I don't know whether I'm fitted for it," she said; "I think all those grand things would frighten me. I'd make a fool of myself."

It amuses me to recall how simple she was.

Who would ever suspect her of having been so, as she presides over our great establishments in town and in the country as if she were born to it? "Nonsense!" I answered. "You'd soon get used to it. You're young yet, and a thousand times better looking than fat old Mrs. Judson. You'll learn in no time. You'll go up with me."

"I don't think they're as happy as we are," she said. "I ought to be ashamed of myself to be so envious and ungrateful." But she sighed again.

I think she soon went to sleep. I lay awake hour after hour, a confusion of thoughts in my mind—we worry a great deal over nice points in morals when we are young. Then, suddenly, as it seemed to me, the command of destiny came—"You can be sole master, in name as well as in fact. You *are* that business. He has no right there. Put him out! He is

only a drag, and will soon ruin everything. It is best for him—and you *must!*"

I tossed and turned. I said to myself, "No! No!" But I knew what I would do. I was not the man to toil for years for an object and then let weakness cheat me out of it. I knew I would make short shrift of a flabby and dangerous and short-sighted generosity when the time came.

One morning, about six months later, Mr. Judson came to me as I was busy at my desk and laid down a note for five hundred thousand dollars, signed by himself. "It'll be all right for me to indorse the firm's name upon that, won't it?" he said, in a careless tone, holding to a corner of the note, as if he were assuming that I would say "Yes," and he could then take it away.

A thrill of delight ran through me at this stretch of the hand of my opportunity for

which I had been planning for years, and for which I had been waiting in readiness for nearly three months. I looked steadily at the note. "I don't know," I said, slowly, raising my eyes to his. His eyes shifted and a hurt expression came into them, as if he, not I, were refusing. "I'm busy just now. Leave it, won't you? I'll look at it presently."

"Oh, certainly," he said, in a surprised, shy voice. I did not look up at him again, but I saw that his hand—a narrow, smooth hand, not at all like mine—was trembling as he drew it away.

We did not speak again until late in the afternoon. Then I had to go to him about some other matter, and, as I was turning away, he said, timidly: "Oh, about that note——"

"It can't be indorsed by the firm," I said, abruptly.

There was a long silence between us. I felt that he was inwardly resenting what he must be calling the insolence of the "upstart" he had "created." I was hating him for the contemptuous thoughts that seemed to me to be burning through the silence from his brain to mine, was hating him for putting me in a false position even before myself with his plausible appearance of being a generous gentleman—I abhor the idea of "gentleman" in business; it upsets everything, at once.

When he did speak, he only said: "Why not?"

I went to my desk and brought a sheet of paper filled with figures. "I have made this up since you spoke to me this morning," I said, laying it before him.

That was false—a trifling falsehood to prevent him from misunderstanding my conduct in making a long and quiet investigation.

The truth is that that crucial paper was the work of a great many days, and not a few nights, of thought and labour—it was my cast for my million.

The paper seemed to show at a glance that the firm was practically ruined, and that Mr. Judson himself was insolvent. It was to a certain extent an over-statement, or, rather, a sort of anticipation of conditions that would come to pass within a year or two if Mr. Judson were permitted to hold to his course. While in a sense I took advantage of his ignorance of our business and his own, and also of his lack of familiarity with all commercial matters, yet, on the other hand, it was not sensible that I should tide him over and carry him, and it was vitally necessary that I should get my million. Had he been shrewder, I should have got it anyhow, only I should have been compelled to use

methods that, perhaps, would have seemed less merciful.

I sat beside him as he read; and, while I pitied him, for I am human, after all, I felt more strongly a sense of triumph, that I, the poor, the obscure, by sheer force of intellect, had raised myself up to where I had my foot upon the neck of this proud man, ranking so high among New York's distinguished merchants and citizens. I have had many a triumph since, and over men far superior to Judson; but I do not think that I have ever so keenly enjoyed any other victory as this, my first and most important.

Still, I pitied him as he read, with face growing older and older, and, with his pride shot through the vitals, quivering in its death agony. I said, gently, when he had finished and had buried his face in his hands: "Now, do you understand, Mr. Judson, why I won't

sign away my commercial honour and my children's bread?"

He shrank and shivered, as if, instead of having spoken kindly to him, I had struck him. "Spare me!" he said, brokenly. "For God's sake, spare me!" and, after a moment, he groaned and exclaimed: "and I—*I*—have ruined this house, established by my grandfather and held in honour for half a century!" A longer pause, then he lifted his haggard face—he looked seventy rather than fifty-five; his eyeballs were sunk in deep, blue-black sockets; his whole expression was an awful warning of the consequences of recklessness in business. I have never forgotten it. "I trust you," he said; "what shall I do?"

He placed himself entirely in my hands; or, rather, he left his affairs where they had been, except when he was muddling them, for more than six years. I dealt generously by him,

for I bought him out by the use of my excellent personal credit, and left him a small fortune in such shape that he could easily manage it. He was free of all business cares; I had taken upon my shoulders not only the responsibilities of that great business, but also a load of debt which would have staggered and frightened a man of less courageous judgment.

I did not see him when the last papers were signed—he was ill and they were sent to his house. Two or three weeks later I heard that he was convalescent and went to see him. Now that he was no longer in my way, and that the debt of gratitude was transferred from me to him, I had only the kindliest, friendliest feelings for him. Those few weeks had made a great change in me. I had grown, I had come into my own, I realised how high I was above the mass of my fellow-men, and

I was insisting upon and was receiving the respect that was my due. My sensations, as I entered the Judson house, were vastly different from what they were when the pompous butler admitted me on the occasion of the one previous visit, and I could see that he felt strongly the alteration in my station. I felt generous pity as I went into the library and looked down at the broken old failure huddled in a big chair. What an unlovely thing is failure, especially grey-haired failure! I said to myself: "How fortunate for him that this helpless creature fell into my hands instead of into the hands of some rascal or some cruel and vindictive man!" I was about to speak, but something in his steady gaze restrained me.

"I have admitted you," he said, in a surprisingly steady voice, when he had looked me through and through, "because I wish you

to hear from me that I know the truth. My son-in-law returned from Europe last week, and, learning what changes had been made, went over all the papers."

He looked as if he expected me to flinch. But I did not. Was not my conscience clear?

"I know how basely you have betrayed me," he went on. "I thank you for not taking everything. I confess your generosity puzzles me. However, you have done nothing for which the law can touch you. What you have stolen is securely yours. I wish you joy of it."

My temper is not of the sweetest—dealing with the trickeries and stupidities of little men soon exhausts the patience of a man who has much to do in the world, and knows how it should be done. But never before or since have I been so insanely angry. I burst into a torrent of abuse. He rang the bell; and,

when the servant came, calm and clear above my raging rose his voice, saying, "Robert, show this person to the door." For the moment my mind seemed paralysed. I left, probably looking as base and guilty as he with his wounded vanity and his sufferings from the loss of all he had thrown away imagined me to be.

I confess that that was a very bad quarter of an hour. But, to make a large success in this world, and in the brief span of a lifetime, one must submit to discomforts of that kind occasionally. There are compensating hours. I had one last week when I attended the dedication of the splendid two-million-dollar recitation hall I have given to —— University.

Not until I was several blocks from Judson's did the sense of my wrongs sting me into rage again. I remember that I said: "Infamous ingratitude! I save this fine gen-

tleman from bankruptcy, and my reward is that he calls me a thief—me, a millionaire!"

Millionaire! In that word there was a magic balm for all the wounds to my pride and my then supersensitive conscience—a justification of the past, a guarantee of the future.

With my million safely achieved, I looked about me as a conqueror looks upon the conquered. A thousand dollars saved is the first step toward a competence; a million dollars achieved is the first step toward a Crœsus; and, in matters of money, as in everything else, "it is the first step that counts," as the French say. I was filled with the passion for more, more, more. I felt myself, in imagination, growing mightier and mightier, lifting myself higher and more dazzlingly above the dull mass of work-a-day people with their routines of petty concerns.

In the days of our modesty my wife used to plan that we would retire when we had twenty thousand a year—enough, she then thought, to provide for every want, reasonable or unreasonable, that we and the children could have. Now, she would have scorned the idea of retiring as contemptuously as I would. She was eager to do her part in the process of expansion and aggrandisement, was eager to see us socially established, to put our children in the position to make advantageous marriages. We would be outshone in New York by none!

To win a million is to taste blood. The million-mania—for, in a sense, I'll admit it is a mania—is roused and put upon the scent, and it never sleeps again, nor is its appetite ever satisfied or even made less ravenous.

A few years, and I left dry goods for finance, where the pursuit of my passion was

more direct and more rapidly successful. Every day I fixed my thoughts upon another million; and, as all who know anything about the million-mania will tell you, the act of fixing the thought upon a million, when one has earned the right to acquire millions, makes that million yours, makes all who stand between you and it aggressors to be clawed down and torn to pieces. As I grew my rights were respected more and more deferentially. Men now bow before me. They understand that I can administer great wealth to the best advantage, that I belong to one of that small class of beings created to possess the earth and to command the improvident and idealess inhabitants thereof how and where and when to work.

My family?

I confess they have not risen to my level or to the opportunities I have made for them.

Naturally, with great wealth, the old simple family relationship was broken up. That was to be expected—the duties of people in our position do not permit indulgence in the simple emotions and pastimes of the family life of the masses. But neither, on the other hand, was it necessary that my wife should become a cold and calculating social figure, full of vanity and superciliousness, instead of maintaining the proud dignity of her position as my wife. Nor was it necessary that my children should become selfish, heartless, pleasure-seekers, caring nothing for me except as a source of money.

I suppose I am in part responsible—my great enterprises have left me little time for the small details of life, such as the training of children. They were admirably educated, too. I provided the best governesses and masters, and saw to it that they learned all that a

lady or a gentleman should know; and in respect of dress and manners I admit that they do very well, indeed. Possibly, the complete breaking up of the family, except as it is held together by my money, is due to the fact that we see so little of one another, each having his or her separate establishment. Possibly I am a little old-fashioned, a little too exacting, in my idea of wife and children. Certainly they are aristocratic enough.

My son James is the thorn in my side. And, whenever I have a moment's rest from my affairs, I find myself thinking of him, worrying over him. The latest development in his character is certainly disquieting.

He was twenty-five years old yesterday. He was educated at our most aristocratic university here, and at one in Europe of the same kind. It was his mother's dream that he should be "brought up as a gentleman"; and

that fell in with my ideas, for I did not wish him to be a money-maker, but the head of the family I purposed to found upon my millions, which are already numerous enough to secure it for many generations. "There is no call for him to struggle and toil as I have," I said to myself. "The sort of financial ability I possess is born in a man and can't be taught or transmitted by birth. He would make a small showing, at best, as a business man. As a gentleman he will shine. He only needs just enough business training to enable him to supervise those who will take care of his fortune and that of the rich woman he will marry." I was determined that he should marry in his own class—and, indeed, he is not a sentimentalist, and, therefore, is not likely to disregard my wishes in that matter.

When he was eighteen I caught him in a fashionable gambling-house one night when I

thought he was at his college. I could not but admire the coolness with which he made the best of it: stood beside me as I sat playing faro, then went over to a roulette table and lost several hundred dollars on a few spins of the ball. But the next day I took him sharply to task—it was one thing for me to play, at my age and with my fortune, I explained, but not the same for him, at his age, and with nothing but an allowance.

He shrugged his shoulders indifferently. "Really, governor," he said, "a man must do as the other fellows in his set do. Didn't you see whom I was with? If you wish me to travel with those people I must go their gait."

That was not unreasonable, so I dismissed him with a cautioning. At twenty he went abroad, and, a year after he had returned, his bills and drafts were still coming. I sent for him. "Why don't you pay your debts, sir?"

I demanded, angrily, for such conduct was directly contrary to my teaching and example.

He gave me his grandest look—he is a handsome, aristocratic-looking fellow, away ahead of what Judson must have been at his age. "But, my dear governor," he said, "a gentleman pays his debts when he feels like it."

"No, he don't," I answered, furiously, for my instinct of commercial promptness was roused. "A scoundrel pays his debts when he feels like it. A gentleman pays 'em when they're due."

His reply was a smile of approval, and "Excellent! The best epigram I've heard since I left Paris. You're as great a genius at making phrases as you are at making money."

I caught him speculating in Wall Street—"One must amuse one's self," he said, cheer-

fully. But I was not to be put off this time. I had had some reports on his life—many wild escapades, many fantastic extravagances. The terrible downfall of two young men of his set made me feel that the time for discipline was at hand. But, as I was very busy, I had only time to read him a brief lecture on speculation and to exact from him a promise that he would keep out of Wall Street. He gave the promise so reluctantly that I felt confident he meant to keep it.

A week ago yesterday morning he came into my bedroom, before I was up, and said to my valet, Pigott: "Just take yourself off, Piggy!" And, when we were alone, he began: "Mother said I was to come straight to you."

"What is it?" I demanded, my anger rising—experience has taught me that the more offhand his manner, the more serious the offence I should have to repair.

"I broke my promise to you about speculating, sir," he replied, much as if he were apologising for having jostled me in a crowd.

I sat up in bed, feeling as if I were afire. "And does a gentleman keep his promises only when he feels like it?" I asked.

"But that isn't all," he went on. "My pool's gone smash—you were on the other side and I never suspected it. And I've got a million to pay, besides——"

He took out his cigarette case, and lighted a cigarette with great deliberation.

"Besides—what?" I said, wishing to know all before I began upon him.

"I wrote your name across the back of a bit of paper," he answered, hiding his face in a big cloud of smoke.

I fell back in the bed, feeling as if I had been struck on the head with a heavy weight. "You scoundrel!" I gasped.

"'*Don't get apoplectic,*' *he said, calmly;* '*you know you stole your start.*'"

"Sour grapes," he muttered, his cheeks aflame and his eyes blazing at me.

"What do you mean?" I said, my mind in confusion.

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes," he quoted, "and the children's teeth are set on edge."

I half sprang from the bed at this insolence. "Don't get apoplectic," he said, calmly; "you know you stole your start."

At this infamous calumny I leaped upon him and flung him bodily out of the room. It was several hours before I was calm enough to dismiss the incident sufficiently to take up my affairs.

This has come at a particularly unfortunate time for me, as I am in the midst of several delicate, vast, and intricate negotiations, involving many millions and demanding all my thought. He has gone down on Long Island

in care of his mother. It will be at least ten days before I can take up his case and dispose of it. I am undecided whether to give him another trial under severe conditions or to cast him off and make his younger brother my principal heir and successor. I confess to a weakness for him—possibly because he is so audacious and fearless. His younger brother is entirely too smooth and diplomatic with me; if I should elevate him, he would fancy that he had deceived me with his transparent tricks.

However, we shall see.

II

About a month after I sent James to my place on Long Island to be in the custody of his mother, I was dining in my Fifth Avenue house with only Burridge, my secretary, and Jack Ridley, who calls himself my "court fool."

Although my mind was crowded with large affairs involving great properties and millions of capital, hardly a day had passed without my thinking of James and of his infamous conduct toward me. But without neglecting the duties which my position as a financial leader impose upon me, it was impossible for me to take time to do my duty as a parent. The duty which particularly pressed and absolutely prevented me from attending to my son was that of overcoming difficulties I had

encountered in consolidating the three railways which I control in the State. To achieve my purpose it was necessary that a somewhat radical change be made in a certain law. I sent my agent to Boss —— to arrange the matter. I learned that he refused to order the change unless I would pay him three hundred thousand dollars in cash and would give him the opportunity to buy to a like amount of the new stock at par. He pleaded that the change would cause a tremendous outcry if it were discovered, as it almost certainly would be, and that he must be in a position to provide a correspondingly large campaign fund to "carry the party" successfully through the next campaign. He said his past favours to me had brought him to the verge of political ruin. In a sentence, the miserable old blackmailer was trying to drive as hard a bargain with me as if I had not been making stiff

contributions to what he calls his "campaign fund" for years with only trifling favours in return. I was willing to pay what the change was worth, but I would not be bled. I brought pressure to bear from the national organisation of his party, and he came round —apparently.

Just as my bill was slipping quietly through the State Senate, having passed the Lower House unobserved, the other boss raised a terrific hullabaloo. Boss —— denied to my people that he had "tipped off" what was doing in order to revenge himself and get his blood-money in another way; but I knew at once that the sanctimonious old thief had outwitted me.

It looked as if I would have to yield. Of course I should have done so in the last straits, for only a fool holds out for a principle when holding out means no gain and a senseless and

costly loss. But the knowledge that a defeat would cost me dear in future transactions of this kind made me struggle desperately. I sent for my lawyer, Stratton—an able fellow, as lawyers go, but, like most of this stupid, lazy human race, always ready to say "impossible" because saying so saves labour. "Stratton," I said, "there must be a way round—there always is. Can't I get what I want by an amendment to some other law that can be slipped through by the lobby of some other corporation as if for its benefit only? Take a week. Paw over the books and rake that brain of yours! There's a hundred and fifty thousand in it for you if you find me the way round."

"But the law—" he began.

I lost my temper—I always do when one of my men begins his reply to an order I've given him with the word "But." "Don't 'but'

me, damn you," said I. "I'm getting sick and tired of your eternal opposition. Crawford"—Crawford was my lawyer until I put him into the Senate—"used always to tell me how I could do what I wanted to do. You're always telling me that I can't do what I want to do."

"I'm sorry to displease you, sir, but——"

" 'But' again!" I exclaimed, sarcastically.

"Then, however," he went on, with a conciliatory smile, "I'm not a legislator; I'm a lawyer."

"Precisely," said I. "And the only use I have for a lawyer is to show me how to do as I please, in spite of these wretched demagogues and blackmailers that control the statute-books. If you are as intelligent as Crawford led me to believe and as my own observation of you suggests, you'll profit by this little talk we've had. Look round you at

the men who are making the big successes in your profession nowadays—look at your predecessor, Crawford. Imitate them and stop casting about for ways of interpreting the law against your employer's interest."

Two days later he came to me in triumph. He had found the "way round." I had my law slipped through, signed by the Governor. and safely put on the statute-book, the two bosses as unsuspicious as were the newspapers and the public. Then I came out in a public disavowal of my original purpose, denounced it as a crime against the people, and deplored that my railroad corporation should be unjustly accused of promoting it. You must fight the devil with fire.

Those two bosses—and the sensational newspapers that had been attacking them and my corporations—were astounded, and haven't recovered yet. It will be six months before

they realise that I have accomplished my purpose; even then they won't be sure that I planned it, but will half believe it was my "luck."

In passing, I may note that Stratton tells me I ought to pay him two hundred and fifty thousand dollars instead of one hundred and fifty thousand—for pulling me out of the hole! He has wholly forgotten having said "can't be done" and "impossible" to me so many times that I finally had to stop him by cursing him violently. With their own vanity and their women-folks' flattery for ever conspiring to destroy their judgment, it's a wonder to me that men are able to get on at all. Indeed, they wouldn't if they didn't have masters like me over them.

After I had got my little joke on the bosses and the impertinent public safely on the statute-book, there remained the problem of how

to take advantage of it without stirring up the sensational newspapers and the politicians, always ready to pander to the spirit of demagogy. I had my rights safely embodied in the law; but in this lawless time that is not enough. Instead of being respectful to the great natural leaders and deferential to their larger vision and larger knowledge, the people regard us with suspicion and overlook our services in their envy of the trifling commissions we get—for, what is the wealth we reserve for ourselves in comparison with the benefits we confer upon the country?

At this dinner which I have mentioned, both Burridge and Ridley were silent, and so my thoughts had no distraction. As I know that it is bad for my digestion to use my brain as I eat, I tried to start a conversation.

"Have you seen Aurora to-day?" I asked

Burridge. She is my eldest daughter, just turned eighteen.

"She and Walter"—he is my second son, within a month or so of twenty-two—"are dining out this evening; she at Carnarvon's, he at Longview's. I think they meet at Mrs. Hollister's dance and come home together."

This was agreeable news. The names told me that my wife was at last succeeding in her social campaign, thanks to the irresistible temptation to the narrow aristocrats of the inner circle in the prospective fortunes of my children. While this social campaign of ours has its vanity side—and I here admit that I am not insensible to certain higher kinds of vanity—it also has a substantial business side. The greatest disadvantage I have laboured under—and at times it was serious—has been a certain suspicion of me as a newcomer and an adventurer. Naturally this has not been les-

sened by the boldness and swiftness of my operations. When I and my family are admitted on terms of intimacy and perfect equality among the people of large and old-established fortune, I shall be absolutely trusted in the financial world and shall be secure in the position of leadership which my brains have won for me and which I now maintain only by steady fighting.

"And Helen?" I went on. Helen is my other daughter, not yet twelve.

"She's dining in her own sitting-room with her companion," replied Burridge.

"I haven't seen her for a day or two," I said.

"Two weeks to-morrow," answered Burridge.

Jack Ridley laughed, and I frowned. It irritates me for Ridley to note it whenever I am caught in seeming neglect of my children.

He pretends not to believe that it is my sense of duty that makes me deprive myself of the family happiness of ordinary men for the sake of my larger duties. But he must know at the bottom that all my self-sacrifice is for my children, for my family, ultimately. I have the thankless, misunderstood toil; they have the enjoyment.

"Two weeks!" I protested; "it can't be!"

"She came to me for her allowance this morning," he said, "and she asked after you. She said your valet had told her you were staying here and were well. She said she'd like to see you some time—if you ever got round to it."

This little picture of my domestic life did not tend to cheer me. Naturally, I went on to think of Jim. Ridley interrupted my thoughts by saying: "Have you been down on Long Island yet?"

This was going too far even for a "court fool"—his name for himself, not mine. Ridley is my pensioner, confidant, listening machine, and talking machine. He is of an old New York family, an honest, intelligent fellow, with an extravagant stomach and back. My wife engaged him, originally, to help her in her social campaigns. I saw that I could use him to better advantage, and he has gradually grown into my confidence.

In my lesser days, one of the things that most irritated me against the very rich was their habit of buying human beings, body and soul, to do all kinds of unmanly work, and I especially abhorred the "parasites" — so I called them—who hung about rich men, entertaining them, submitting to their humours, and bearing degradations and humiliations in exchange for the privileges of eating at luxurious tables, living in the colder corners of

palaces, driving in the carriages of their patrons, and being received nominally as their social equals. But now I understand these matters better. It isn't given to many men to be independent. As for the "parasites," how should I do without Jack Ridley?

I can't have friends. Friends take one's time—they must be treated with consideration, or they become dangerous enemies. Friends impose upon one's friendship—they demand inconvenient or improper, or, at any rate, costly favours which it is difficult to refuse. I must have companionship, and fate compels that my companion shall be my dependant, one completely under my control—a Jack Ridley. I look after his expensive stomach and back; he amuses me and keeps me informed as to the trifling matters of art, literature, gossip, and so forth, which I have no time to look up, yet must know if I am to

make any sort of appearance in company. Really, next to my gymnasium, I regard poor old Jack as my most useful belonging, so far as my health and spirits are concerned.

To his impertinent reminder of my neglected duty I made no reply beyond a heavy frown. The rest of the dinner was eaten in oppressive silence, I brooding over the absence of cheerfulness in my life. They say it is my fault, but I know it is simply their stupidity in being unable to understand how to deal with a superior personality. It is my fate to be misunderstood, publicly and privately. The public grudgingly praises, often even derides, my philanthropies; the members of my family laugh at my generosities and self-sacrifices for them.

As I was going to my apartment and to bed, Ridley waylaid me. "You're offended with me, old man?" he asked, his eyes moist

and his lips trembling under his grey moustache. He weeps easily: at a glass of especially fine wine; over a sentimental story in a paper or magazine; if a grouse is cooked just right; when I am cross with him. And I think all his emotions, whether of heart or of stomach, are genuine—and probably about as valuable as most emotions.

"Not at all, not at all, Jack," I said, reassuringly; "but you ought to be careful when you see I'm low in my mind."

"Do go down to see the boy," he went on, earnestly. He's a good boy at heart, as good as he is handsome and clever. Give him a little of your precious time and he'll be worth more to you than all your millions."

"He's a young scalawag," said I, pretending to harden. "I'm almost convinced that it's my duty to drive him out and cut him

off altogether. After all I've done for him! After all the pains I've taken with him!"

Ridley looked at me timidly, but found courage to say: "He told me he'd never talked with you so much as sixty consecutive minutes in his whole life!"

This touched me at the moment. I'm soft at times, where my family is concerned. "I'll see; I'll see," I said. "Perhaps I can go down to him Sunday. But don't annoy me about it again, Jack!" There's a limit to my good-nature, even with poor old well-meaning Ridley.

But other matters pressed in, and it was the following Monday and then the following Saturday before I knew it. Then came the first Sunday in the month, and Burridge, as usual, brought in the preceding month's domestic accounts as soon as I had settled myself

at breakfast after my run and swim and rub-down in my "gym" in the basement. As a rule, at that time I'm in my best possible humour. My wife and children know it and lie in wait then with any particularly impudent requests for favours or particularly outrageous confessions that must be made. But on the first Sunday in the month even my "gym" can't put me in good-humour. I am a liberal man. My large gifts to education and charity and my generosity with my family prove it beyond a doubt. My wife looks scornful when I speak of this. Her theory is that my public gifts are an exhibition of my vanity, and that my establishments, my yacht, etc., etc., are partly vanity, and partly my selfish passion for my own comfort. She, however, never attributes a good motive or instinct to me, or to any one else, nowadays. Really, the change in her since our modest days is incred-

ible. It is amazing how arrogant affluence makes women.

But, as I was saying, my monthly bill-day is too much for my good-humour. It is not the money going out that I mind so much, though I'm not ashamed to admit that it is not so agreeable to me to see money going out as it is to see money coming in. The real irritation is the waste—the wanton, wicked, dangerous waste.

I can't attend to details. I can't visit kitchens, do marketing, superintend housekeepers and butlers, oversee stables, and buy all the various supplies. I can't shop for furniture and clothing, and look after the entertainments. All those things are my wife's business and duty. And she has a secretary, and a housekeeper, and Burridge, and Ridley, to assist her. Yet the bills mount and mount; the waste grows and grows. Extravagance

for herself, extravagance for her children, thousands thrown away with nothing whatever to show for it! The money runs away like water at a left-on faucet.

The result is the almost complete estrangement between my wife and me. Every month we have a fierce quarrel over the waste, often a quarrel that lasts the month through and breaks out afresh every time we meet. She denounces me as a miser, a vulgarian. She goads me into furious outbursts before the children. What with my battles against stupidity and insolence downtown, and my battles against waste in my family, my life is one long contention. However, I suppose this is the lot of all the great men who play large parts on the world's stage. No wonder those who fancy we are on earth to seek and find happiness regard life as a ghastly fraud.

"What's the demnition total, Burridge?" I

asked, when he appeared with his arms full of books and papers.

"Ninety-two thousand, four, twenty-six, fifty-one," he answered, in a tone of abject apology.

I could not restrain an indignant expostulation. "That's seventy-three hundred and four above last month. Impossible! You've made a mistake in adding."

He went over his figures nervously and flushed scarlet. "I beg your pardon, sir," he said, in a tone of terror. "The total is ninety-five thousand instead of ninety-two."

Ten thousand-odd above month before last! Eighty-nine hundred above the same month last year! I had to restrain myself from physical violence to Burridge. I ordered him out of the room—giving as my reason anger at his mistake in addition. I wanted to hear no more, as I felt sure the details of

the shameful waste would put me in a rage which would impair my health. The total was enough for my purpose—we were now living at the rate of more than a million dollars a year! I took the eleven o'clock train for my place on Long Island.

When I reached my railway station none of my traps was there. In my angry preoccupation I had forgotten to telephone from the Fifth Avenue house; and, of course, neither Pigott nor the butler nor Burridge nor Ridley nor any of my herd of blockhead servants had had the consideration to repair my oversight. Yet there are fools who say money will buy everything. Sometimes I think it won't buy anything but annoyances.

So I had to go to my place in a rickety, smelly station-surrey—and that did not soothe my rage. However, as I drove into and through my grounds—there isn't a finer park

on Long Island—I began to feel somewhat better. There is nothing like lands and houses to give one the sensation of wealth, of possession. I have often gone into my vaults and have looked at the big bundles and boxes of securities; and, by setting my imagination to work, I have got some sort of notion how vast my wealth and power are. But bits of paper supplemented by imagination are not equal to the tangible, seeable things—just as a hundred-dollar bill can't give one the sensation in the fingers and in the eyes that a ten-dollar gold piece gives. That is why I like my big houses and my city lots and my parked acres in the country—yes, and my yacht and carriages and furniture, my servants and horses and dogs, my family's jewels and finery.

But the instant I entered the house my spirits soured again, curdled into an acid fury.

I had sent my son down there with his mother to await my sentence upon him for his crimes—his insults to me, his waste of nearly a million of my money, his violation of his word of honour, his forgery. I had been assuming that in those five weeks of waiting he was suffering from remorse and suspense, was thinking of his crimes against me and of my anger and justice. As I entered the large drawing-room unannounced, they were about to go in to luncheon. "They" means my wife and James, and Walter and Aurora, who had gone down to the country for the week-end. "They" means also ten others, six of whom were guests staying in the house. As I stood dumfounded, five more who had been to church came trooping in. I had gone, expecting a house of mourning. I had found a revel.

At sight of me the laughter and conversa-

tion died. My wife coloured. James looked abashed for a moment. Then—what a well-mannered, self-possessed dog he is!—he burst out laughing. "Fairly trapped!" he said. And he went on to explain to the others: "The governor and I had a little fall-out, and he sent me down here to play with the ashes. You've caught me with the goods on me, governor. It's up to me—I've got to square myself. So I'll pay by giving you the two prettiest young girls in the room to sit on either side of you at luncheon. Let's go in, for I'm half-starved."

As all the women in the room except three —including Aurora—were married, James's remark was doubly adroit. What could I do but put aside my wrath and set my guests at their ease?

This was the less difficult to do as Natalie Bradish and Horton Kirkby were among the

guests—and stopping in the house. I have long had my eye on Miss Bradish as the proper wife for James or Walter—whichever should commend himself to me as my fit successor at the head of the family I purpose to found with the bulk of my wealth. She is a handsome girl; she has a proud, distinguished look and manner; she will inherit several millions some day that can't be distant, as her father is in hopelessly bad health; she comes of a splendid, widely connected family, and is extremely ambitious and free from sentimental nonsense. Young Kirkby is the very husband for Aurora. His great-grandfather founded their family securely in city real estate and lived long enough firmly to establish the tradition of giving the bulk of the fortune to the eldest male heir. Kirkby is not brilliant; but Aurora has brains enough for two, and he has a set of long, curved fingers

that never relax their hold upon what's in them.

After luncheon I drew my wife away to the sitting-room for the plain talk which was the object of my visit. As the presence of Miss Bradish and Kirkby in the house had lessened my anger on the score of my wife and son's light-hearted way of looking at his crimes, I put forward the matter of the expense accounts.

"Burridge tells me the total for last month is—" I began, and paused. As I was speaking I was glancing round the room. I had not been in it for several years. I had just noted the absence of a Corot I bought ten years before and paid sixteen thousand dollars for. I don't care for pictures or that sort of thing, any more than I care for the glitter of diamonds or the colours of gold and silver in themselves. I know that most of this talk of

"art" and the like is so much rubbish and affectation. But works of art, like the precious stones and metals, have come to be the conventionally accepted standards of luxury, the everywhere recognised insignia of the aristocracy of wealth. So I have them, and add to my collection steadily just as I add to my collection of finely bound books that no one ever opens. What slaves of convention and ostentation we are!

"What's become of the Corot that used to hang there?" I asked, suspiciously, because I had had so many experiences of my family's trifling with my possessions.

My wife smiled scornfully. "I believe you carry round in your head an inventory of everything we've got, even to the last pot in the kitchen," she said. "The Corot is safe. It's hanging in my bedroom."

In her bedroom! A Corot I've been offered

twenty-five thousand dollars for, and she had hidden it away in her bedroom! I was irritated when she put it in her sitting-room where few people came, for it should have had a good place in our New York palace. But in her bedroom, where no one but the servants would ever have a chance to look at it!

"Why didn't you put it in the attic or the cellar?" I asked.

She lifted her eyebrows and gave me an affected, disdainful glance. "I put it in my bedroom because I like to look at it," she said.

I laughed. What nonsense! As if any sensible person—and she is unquestionably shrewdly sensible—ever looks at those things except when some one is by, noting their "devotion to art." I said: "Certainly my family has the most amazing disregard of money—of value. If it were not——"

"You started to say something about last month's accounts," she interrupted.

"The total was ninety-five thousand," I said, looking sternly at her. "You are now living at the rate of more than a million a year. In ten years we have jumped from one hundred thousand a year to a million a year. And this madness grows month by month."

She—shrugged her shoulders!

"I came to say to you, madam—" I went on, furiously.

"Did you look at the items?" she cut in coldly.

"No," I replied; "I could not trust myself to do it."

"Twenty-seven thousand of last month's expenses went toward paying a small instalment on your little place for your own amusement in the Adirondacks. I had nothing to

do with it. None of us but you will ever go there."

This was most exasperating. I can't account for my leaping into such a trap, except on the theory that my preoccupation with the railway matters must have made me forget ordering that item into my domestic accounts instead of into my personal accounts downtown. Of course, my contention of my family's extravagance was sound. But I had seemed to give the whole case away, had destroyed the effect of all I had said, and, as I glanced at my wife, I saw a triumphant, contemptuous smile in her eyes. "You are always trying to punish some one else for your own sins," she said. "The truth is that the only truly prodigal member of the family is yourself."

Me prodigal with my own wealth! But I did not answer her. One is at a hopeless dis-

advantage in discussion with a woman. They are insensible to reason and logic except when they can gain an advantage by using them. It's like having to keep to the rules in a game where your antagonist keeps to them or makes his own rules as it suits him. "Nevertheless," I said, "the waste in my establishments must stop and your son James must come to his senses. It was about him that I came."

"Poor boy—he's had such a bad example all his life!" she said. "My dear, *we* have no right to judge him."

I knew that she, like him, was throwing up to me my transactions with Judson. And like him, she was taking the petty, narrow view of them. "Madam," I said, "your son is a liar, forger, and thief."

Just then there came a knock at the door and James's voice called: "May I come in, mother?"

"No, go away, Jim. Your father and I are busy," she called in reply.

I went to the door and opened it, beside myself with fury. "Come in!" I exclaimed. "It's business that concerns you."

He entered—tall and strong, his handsome face graver than I had ever seen it before. He closed the door behind him and stood looking from one to the other of us. "Well?" he said, "but—no abuse!"

Whenever James and I have come face to face in a crisis I have always had the, to me, maddening feeling that a will as strong as my own has been lifting its head defiantly against me. My wife and my son Walter deal with me by evasion and slippery trickery. My daughter Aurora wins from me, when I choose to let her, by cajolery or tears. Little Helen has never yet had to do with me in a serious matter, and I cannot remember her ever ask-

"'*You liar—you forger!*'"

ing me even the trifling favours which most children seek from their parents. But James has always played the high and haughty—and I am ashamed to think how often he has ridden me down and defeated me and gained his object. As I have looked upon him as entitled to peculiar consideration because I had planned for him one day to wear my mantle, he has had me at a disadvantage. But my indulgent conduct toward him only makes the blacker his conduct toward me.

As he stood there that day, looking so calm and superior, I can't describe the conflict of pride in him and hatred of him that surged up in me. I lost control of myself. I clinched my fists and shook them in his face. "You liar! You forger! You conscienceless——"

His mother rushed between us. "I knew it! I knew it!" she wailed. "Ever since he was a baby, I knew this day would come. Oh,

my God! James, my husband—James, my son!"

James lowered the hand he had lifted to strike me. His face was pale and his eyes were blazing hate at me—I saw his real feeling toward me at last. How could I have overlooked it so long?

"Who would ever think you were my father?" he asked, in a voice that sounded to me like an echo of my own. "You—with hate in your face—hate for the son whom you poisoned before he was born, whom you have been poisoning ever since with your example. *You* —my *father!*"

The young scoundrel had taunted me into that calm fury which is so dreadful that I fear it myself—for, when I am possessed by it, there is no length to which I would not go. Our wills had met in final combat. I saw that I must crush him—the one human being who

dared to oppose me and defy me, and he my own child who should have been deferential, grateful, obedient, unquestioning. "But I am *not* your father," I said. "In my will I had made you head of the family, had given you two-thirds of my estate. I shall write a revocation here—immediately. I shall make a new will to-morrow."

If the blow crushed him, he did not show it. He did not even wince as he saw forty millions swept away from him. "As you please," he said, putting scorn into his face and voice—as if I could be fooled by such a pretence. The man never lived who could scorn a tenth, or even a fortieth, of forty millions. "I came into this room," he went on, "to tell you how ashamed I was of what I have done—how vile and low I have felt. I didn't come to apologise to *you,* but to my—my mother and to myself in your pres-

ence. I am still ashamed of what I did, of what you made me do. Do you know why I did it? Because your money, your millions, have changed you from a man into a monster. This wealth has injured us all—yes, even mother, noble though she is. But you—it has made you a fiend. Well, I wished to be independent of you. You have brought me up so that I could not live without luxury. But you haven't destroyed in me the last spark of self-respect. And I decided to make a play for a fortune of my own. I—broke my word and speculated. I overreached—I saw my one hope of freeing myself from slavery to you slipping from me. I—I—no matter. What *did* matter after I'd broken my word? And I was justly punished. I lost—everything."

As he flung these frightful insults at me my calm fury grew cold as well. "You will

leave the house within an hour," I said. "Your mother will make your excuses to her guests —I shall spare you the humiliation of a public disowning. During my lifetime you shall have nothing from me—no, nor from your mother. I shall see to that. In my will I shall leave you a trifling sum—enough to keep you alive. I am responsible to society that you do not become a public charge. And you may from this day continue on your way to the penitentiary without hindrance from those who were your kin."

As I finished, he smiled. His smile grew broader, and became a laugh. "Very well, ex-father," he said; "there's one inheritance you can't rob me of—my mind. I'll lop off its rotten spots, and I think what's left will enable me to stagger along."

"You imagine I'll relent," I went on, "but my days of weakness with you are over."

"You—relent!" He smiled mockingly. "I'm not such a fool as to fancy that. Even if you had a heart, your pride wouldn't let you. And I'm not sorry—just at this moment. Perhaps I shall be later—I'm fond of cash, and your pot for me was a big one. But just now I feel as if you were doing me a favour." He drew a long breath. "God!" he exclaimed. "I'm free! In spite of myself, I'm free! I'm a man at last!"

I did not care to listen to any more of the frothings of the silly young fool. Already I was regarding him as a stranger, was turning to his brother Walter as a possible successor to him and my principal heir. I left the room and went for a walk with my daughter and Natalie Bradish. When we returned he was gone. I sent for Walter and told him the news.

"Your brother has forfeited everything," I

said, in conclusion. "It remains for you to prove yourself worthy of the place I had designed for him. In the will I shall make tomorrow my estate will be divided equally among my three children, your mother getting her dower rights. If you do not show the qualities I hope, the will shall stand. If you do, I shall make another, giving you your own share plus what I had intended for James."

Walter is a square-shouldered youth of medium height, with irregular, rather commonplace features, a rough skin, and an unpleasant habit of shifting his eyes rapidly round and round yours as you talk with him —I am as impartial a judge of my own family as a stranger would be. Walter has been a good deal of a sneak all his life—at least, he was up to the time when a man's real character disappears behind the pose he adopts to face

and fool the world with. "I don't know what to say, sir," he said to me now. "I'd plead for my brother, only that you are just and must have done what was right. I don't know how to thank you for the chance you're giving me. I can't hope to come up to your standards, but I'll just keep on trying to do my best to please you and show my gratitude to you. I always have been very proud of being your son. It will make me doubly proud if I can win your confidence so that you will select me as head of our family if it should ever need another head. But all that's too far away to think about."

I was much pleased by the modesty and sound sense of what he said, and from that moment have been taking a less unfavourable view of him. Indeed, it seems to me that I was unjust to him in my partiality for his brother. I exaggerated Jim's impudence into

courage, Walter's diplomacy into cringing cowardice. This is another illustration of how careful a man should be not to let his hopes and desires blind him. I had been refusing to see what a wretched, untrustworthy scoundrel James was, all because I wished my elder son and namesake to be my principal heir and had made up my mind that he must be worthy of the honour.

There was only one point left unguarded—lest his mother should, in her weakness for her first-born, secretly supply him with money. I might have been powerless to prevent this, though I had determined to take from her all power over the domestic expenditures and put it in the hands of Burridge, in order that she might have as few spare dollars as possible. I knew I could count on her not sacrificing her personal vanity to keep him in funds. But with characteristic folly James shut his one

door upon himself and spared me the trouble of watching his mother.

She came to town Thursday last and sent for me. I went up to the house for luncheon with her. As soon as she heard that I was there she joined me in the library. Her face was stern and hard. "Read this," she said, handing me a letter. It was in James's handwriting:

Mother dear: You don't know Theodora, or you couldn't have written what you did about her. You will love her—no one can help loving her who knows her. We were married this morning. When will you come and let me show her what a beautiful, good mother I have? I know you'll come as soon as ever you can. JIM.

"Theodora?" I said—I couldn't imagine whom he had induced to share his poverty.

"Theodora Glendenning," she replied.

"The miserable boy!" I exclaimed, forget-

ting for an instant that he is nothing to me. Theodora Glendenning was a widow, an adventuress from heaven knows where. She had obtained a slight footing in fairly good New York society a few years before, as a young girl, and had been invited to one or two first-class houses. She was good-looking, had the ways and voice of a siren, and a certain plausible sweetness and gentleness. She trapped young Nick Glendenning. His family promptly cast him off and they sank into obscurity, living on the income of the few hundred thousands he had inherited from a grandaunt. Then he died. We did not know where or how James met her.

"He wrote me on Tuesday," said my wife, "that he'd been engaged to Theodora for six months. It is infamous. I wrote him that, if he sacrificed all his chances for position and recognition in New York by marrying an

adventuress, he needn't expect me to do anything for him."

"Now you realise that I knew what I was about when I shook him off," I said.

"Yes, James. And after all the care I gave him, after all I did for him! To defy me, to trample on my love, and marry that worthless nobody with her beggarly income! I had arranged for him to marry Natalie Bradish. She'd have helped us with her splendid family."

I smiled. "She wouldn't have had him, my dear," I said; "she will marry Walter."

"No—she would have married James. She was crazy about him."

This amazed me—women are always thinking each other sentimental, yet every woman ought to know that at bottom all women are sensible and never take their eyes off the main chance. But I said nothing. I was too well

content with matters as they stood. Women are so perverse that had I joined her just then in attacking James she might have veered round to him again on impulse.

Now that he has thwarted her ambitions for him, and for herself through him, she will be bitter in her hate where I shall be calm in mine. She had her whole heart in the social strength she was to gain by his making a brilliant marriage. He has crushed her heart, has killed the affection she had for him. She would have forgiven him anything but a wife offensive to her.

I don't altogether like the idea of this sort of mother love. Men should be just; but women should be merciful and loving. New York and wealth and the social struggle have made her too hard. However, I'm not quarrelling seriously with what works so admirably for my purpose as to James. Our common

disaster in him will draw us nearer together than we have been for years—at least until the next wrangle over an expense account. For years we have had opposite interests—I, to restrain her; she, to outwit me. Now we again have a common interest, and it is common interest that makes husband and wife live together in harmonious peace.

Nothing happens with me as with ordinary human beings. What could be stranger than that my new era of domestic quiet should be founded, not upon love or affection or feelings of that sort, but upon hate—upon my and her common hate for our unworthy elder son?

III

It has been two years and five months since I expelled James, yet my dissatisfaction with Walter has not decreased.

No doubt this is due in part to the grudge a man of my age who loves power and wealth must have against the impatient waiter for his throne and sceptre. No doubt, also, age and long familiarity with power have made me, perhaps, too critical of my fellow-beings and too sensitive to their shortcomings. But, after all allowances, I have real ground for my feeling toward Walter.

My principal heir and successor, who is to sustain my dignity after I am gone, and to maintain my name in the exalted position to which my wealth and genius have raised it,

should have, above all else, two qualifications —character and an air of distinction.

Walter has neither.

My wife defends him for his lack of distinction in manner and look by saying that I have crushed him. "How could he have the distinction you wish," she says, "when he has grown in the shadow of such a big, masterful, intolerant personality as yours?" There is justice in this. I admire distinction, or individuality, but at a distance. I cannot tolerate it in my immediate neighbourhood. There it tempts me to crush it. I suspect that it would have exasperated me even in one of my own flesh and blood. Indeed, at bottom, that may have had something to do with the beginnings of my break with James.

But whatever excuse there may be for Walter's shifty, smirking, deprecating personality, which seems to me, at times, not a peg above

the personality of a dancing-master, there is no excuse whatsoever for his lack of character.

I rarely talk to him so long as ten minutes without catching him in a lie—usually a silly lie, about nothing at all. In money matters he is not sensibly prudent, but downright miserly. That is not an unnatural quality in age, for then the time for setting the house in order is short. An avaricious young man is a monstrosity. I suppose that avarice is almost inseparable from great wealth, or even from the expectation of inheriting it. Just as power makes a man greedy of power, so riches make a man greedy of riches. But, granting that Walter has to be avaricious, why hasn't he the wit to conceal it? It gives me no pleasure, nowadays, to give; in fact, it makes me suffer to see anything going out, unless I know it is soon to return bringing a harvest after its kind. Yet, I give—at least, I have given, and

that liberally. Walter need not have made himself so noted and disliked for stinginess that he has been able to get into only one of the three fashionable clubs I wished him to join—and that one the least desirable.

His mother says he was excluded because the best people of our class resent my having elbowed and trampled my way into power too vigorously, and with too few "beg pardons," and "if you pleases." Perhaps my courage in taking my own frankly wherever I found it may have made his admission difficult, just as it has made our social progress slow. But it would not have excluded him—would not have made him patently unpopular where my money and the fear of me gains him toleration. A very few dollars judiciously spent would have earned him the reputation of a good fellow, generous and free-handed.

Your poor chap has to fling away every-

thing he's got to get that name, but a rich man can get it for what, to him, is a trifle. By means of a smile or a dinner I'd have to pay for anyhow, or perhaps by allowing him to ride a few blocks beside me in my brougham or victoria, I send a grumbler away trumpeting my praises. I throw an industry into confusion to get possession of it, and then I give a twentieth of the profits to some charity or college; instead of a chorus of curses, I get praise, or, at worst, silence. The public lays what it is pleased to call the "crime" upon the corporation I own; the benefaction is credited to me personally.

Nor has Walter the excuse for his lying and shifting and other moral lapses that a man who is making his way could plead.

I did many things in my early days which I'd scorn to do now. I did them only because they were necessary to my purpose. Walter

has not the slightest provocation. When his mother says, "But he does those things because he's afraid of you," she talks nonsense. The truth is that he has a moral twist. It is one thing for a clear-sighted man of high purpose and great firmness, like myself, to adopt indirect measures as a temporary and desperate expedient; it's vastly different for a Walter, with everything provided for him, to resort to such measures voluntarily and habitually.

Sometimes I think he must have been created during one of my periods of advance by ambuscade.

How ridiculous to fall out with honesty and truth when there's any possible way of avoiding it! To do so is to use one's last reserves at the beginning of a battle instead of at the crisis.

However, it's Walter or nobody. I cannot

abandon my life's ambition, the perpetuation of my fortune and fame in a family line. Next to its shortness, life's greatest tragedy for men of my kind is the wretched tools with which we must work. All my days I've been a giant, doing a giant's work with a pygmy's puny tools. Now, with the end—no, not near, but not so far away as it was—

Just as I got home from the Chamber of Commerce dinner two weeks ago to-night, my wife was coming down to go to Mrs. Garretson's ball. The great hall of my house, with its costly tapestries and carpets and statuary, is a source of keen pleasure to me. I don't think I ever enter it, except when I'm much preoccupied, that I don't look round and draw in some such satisfaction as a toper gets from a brimming glass of whiskey. But, for that matter, all the luxuries and comforts which wealth gives me are a steady source of grati-

fication. The children of a man who rose from poverty to wealth may possibly—I doubt it—have the physical gratification in wealth blunted. But the man who does the rising has it as keen on the last day of healthy life as on the first day he became the owner of a carriage with somebody in his livery to drive him.

As my wife came down the wide marble stairs the great hall became splendid. I had to stop and admire her, or, rather, the way she shone and sparkled and blazed, becapped and bedecked and bedraped with jewels as she was. I have an eye that sees everything; that's why I'm accused of being ferociously critical. I saw that there was something incongruous in her appearance—something that jarred. A second glance showed me that it was the contrast between her rubies and diamonds, in bands, in clusters, and in ropes, and

her fading physical charms. She is not altogether faded yet—she is fifty to my sixty-four—and she has been for years spending several hours a day with *masseuses,* complexion-specialists, hair-doctors, and others of that kind. But she has reached the age where, in spite of doctoring and dieting and deception, there are many and plain signs of that double tragedy of a handsome, vain woman's life—on the one hand, the desperate fight to make youth remain; on the other hand, the desperate fight to hide from the world the fact that it is about to depart for ever.

Naturally it depressed me that I could no longer think with pride of her beauty, and of how it was setting off my wealth. I must have shown what I was thinking, for she looked at me, first with anxious inquiry, then with frightened suspicion, as if guessing my thoughts.

Poor woman! I felt sorry for her.

Her life, for the past twenty years, has been based wholly on vanity. The look in my face told her, perhaps a few weeks earlier than she would have learned it from her mirror or some malicious bosom friend, that the basis of her life was swept away, and that her happiness was ended. She hurried past me, spoke savagely to the four men-servants who were jostling one another in trying to help her to her carriage, and drove away in her grandeur to the ball, probably as miserable a creature as there was on Manhattan Island that night.

I went up to my apartment, half depressed, half amused—I have too keen a sense of humour not to be amused whenever I see vanity take a tumble. As I reached my sitting-room I was in the full swing of my moralisings on the physical vanity of women, and on their silliness in setting store by their beauty after

it has served its sole, legitimate, really useful purpose—has caught them husbands. Only mischief can come of beauty in a married woman. She should give it up, retire to her home, and remain there until it is time for her to bring out and marry off her grown sons and daughters. If my wife hadn't been handsome she might have done this, and so might have continued to shine in her proper sphere —the care of her household and her children, the comfort of her husband.

As I reached this point in my moralisings I caught sight of my own face by the powerful light over my shaving glass.

I've never taken any great amount of interest in my face, or anybody else's. I've no belief in the theory that you can learn much from your adversary's expression. In a sense, the face is the map of the mind. But the map has so many omissions and mismarkings, all

at important points, that time spent in studying it is time wasted. My plan has been to go straight along my own line, without bothering my head about the other fellow's plans—much less about his looks. I think my millions prove me right.

As I was saying, I saw my face—suddenly, with startling clearness, and when my mind was on the subject of faces. The sight gave me a shock—not because my expression was sardonic and—yes, I shall confess it—cruel and bitterly unhappy. The shock came in that, before I recognised myself, I had said, "Who is this *old* man?"

The glass reflected wrinkles, bags, creases, hollows—signs of the old age of a hard, fierce life.

Curiously, my first comment on myself, seen as others saw me, was a stab into my physical vanity—not a very deep stab, but

deep enough to mock my self-complacent jeers at my wife. Then I went on to wonder why I had not before understood the reason for many things I've done of late.

For example, I hadn't realised why I put five hundred thousand dollars into a mausoleum. I did it without the faintest notion that my instinctive self was saying, "You'd better see to it at once that you'll be fittingly housed —some day." Again, I hadn't understood why it was becoming so hard for me to persuade myself to keep up my public gifts.

I have always seen that for us men of great wealth gifts are not merely a wise, but a vitally necessary, investment.

Jack Ridley insists that I exaggerate the envy the lower classes feel for us. "You rich men think others are like yourselves," he says. "Because all your thoughts are of money, you fancy the rest of the world is equally narrow

and spends most of its time in hating you and plotting against you. Why, the fact is that rich men envy one another more than the poor envy them." There's some truth in this. The fellow with one million enviously hates the fellow with ten; as for most fellows with twenty or thirty, they can hardly bear to hear the fellows with fifty or sixty spoken of. But, in the main, Jack is wrong. I've not forgotten how I used to feel when I had a few hundred a year; and so I know what's going on in the heads of people when they bow and scrape and speak softly, as they do to me. It means that they're envying and are only too eager to find an excuse for hating. They want me to think that they like me.

I used to give chiefly because I liked the fame it brought me—also, a little, because it made me feel that I was balancing my rather ruthless financial methods by doing vast good

with what many would have kept selfishly to the last penny. Latterly my chief motive has been more substantial; and I wonder how I could have let wealth-hunger so blind me, as it has in the past four or five years, that I have haggled over and cut my public gifts.

The very day after I saw my face in the mirror I definitely committed myself to my long tentatively promised gift of an additional four millions to the university which bears my name. I also arranged to get those four millions—but that comes later. Finally, I began to hasten my son Walter's marriage to Natalie Bradish.

My son Walter!

It certainly isn't lack of shrewdness that unfits him to be head of the family. Why do the qualities we most admire in ourselves, and find most useful there, so often irritate and even disgust us in another?

I have not told him that he is already the principal heir under the terms of my will. He will work harder to please me so long as he thinks the prize still withheld—still to be earned. He does not know how firmly my mind is set against James. So he never loses an opportunity to clinch my purpose. One day last week, in presence of his sister Aurora, I was reproving him for one of his many shortcomings, and, to enforce my reproof, was warning him that such conduct did not advance him toward the place from which his brother had been deposed.

His upper lip always twitches when he is about to launch one of those bits of craftiness he thinks so profound. The longer I live, the deeper is my contempt for craft—it so rarely fails to tangle and strangle itself in its own unwieldy nets. After his lip had twitched awhile, he looked furtively at Aurora. I

looked also, and saw that she was a partner in his scheme, whatever it was.

"Well!" said I, impatiently, "what is it? Speak out!"

"You spoke of the position James lost," he forced himself to say; "there wasn't any such place, was there, Aurora?"

"No," she answered; "James was deceiving you right along."

"What do you mean?" I demanded.

Aurora looked nervously at Walter, and he said: "James often used to talk to us about your plans, and he always said that he wouldn't let you make him your principal heir. He said he would disregard your will and would just divide the money up, giving a third to mother and making all us children equal heirs with him."

It is amazing how the most astute man will overlook the simplest and plainest dangers.

In all my thinking and planning on the subject of founding a family. I had never once thought of the possibility of my will being voluntarily broken by its chief beneficiary.

"What reason did he give?" I asked, for I could conceive no reason whatsoever.

Aurora and Walter were silent. Walter looked as if he wished he had not launched his torpedo at James.

"What reason, Aurora?" I insisted.

She flushed and stammered: "He said he—he didn't want to be hated by mother and the rest of us. He said we'd have the right to hate him, and couldn't help it if he should be low enough to profit by your—your——"

"My—what?"

"Your heartlessness."

"And do you think my plan was heartless?" I asked.

"No," said Aurora, but I saw that she thought "Yes."

"You've a right to do as you wish with your own," said Walter. "We know you'll do what is for the best interest of us all. Even if you should leave us nothing, we'd still be in your debt. You owe us nothing, father. We owe you everything."

Although this was simply a statement of a truth which I hold to be fundamental, it irritated me to hear him say it. I know too well what havoc self-interest works in the sense of right and wrong, and Walter would be the first of my children to insult my memory if he were to get less by a penny than any other of the family. Had I been concerning myself about what my wife and my children would think of me after I was gone, I should never have entertained the idea of founding a family. But men of large view and large wealth

and large ambition do not heed these minor matters. When it comes to human beings, they deal in generals, not in particulars.

A fine world we should have if the masters of it consulted the feelings of those whom destiny compels them to use or to discard.

I looked at this precious pair of plotters satirically. "Naturally," said I, "you never spoke to me of James's purpose so long as there was a chance of your profiting by his intended treachery to me." Then to Aurora I added: "I understand now why, for several months after James left, you persisted in begging me to take him back."

Aurora burst into tears. As tears irritate me, I left the room. Thinking over the scandalous exhibition of cupidity which these children of mine had given, I was almost tempted to tear up my will and make a new one creating a vast public institution that would bear

my name, and endowing it with the bulk of my wealth. I have often wondered why an occasional man of great wealth has done this. I now have no doubt that usually it has been because he was disgusted by the revolting greediness of his natural heirs. If rich men should generally adopt this course, I suspect their funerals would have less of the air of sunshine bursting through black clouds—it's particularly noticeable in the carriages immediately behind the hearse.

Jack Ridley says my sense of humour is like an Apache's. Perhaps that's why the idea of a posthumous joke of this kind tickles me immensely. Were I not a serious man, with serious purposes in the world, I might perpetrate it.

The net result of Walter and Aurora's effort to advance themselves—I wonder what Walter promised Aurora that induced her to

aid him?—was that I formed a new plan. I resolved that Walter should marry at once. As soon as he has a male child I shall make a new will leaving it the bulk of my estate, and giving Walter only the control of the income for life—or until the child shall have become a man thirty years old.

That evening I ordered him to arrange with Natalie for a wedding within two months. I knew he would see her at the opera, as my wife had invited her to my box. I intended to ask him in the morning what he and she had settled upon, but before I had a chance I saw in my paper a piece of news that put him and her out of my mind for the moment.

James, so the paper said, was critically ill with pneumonia at his house in East Sixty-third Street, near Fifth Avenue. He has lived there ever since he was married, and has

kept up a considerable establishment. I am certain that his wife's dresses and entertainments are part of the cause of my wife's rapid aging. Really, her hatred of that woman amounts to insanity. It amazes me, used as I am to the irrational emotions of women. I could understand her being exasperated by the social success of James and his wife. I confess that it has exasperated me—almost as much as has his preposterous luck in Wall Street. But there is undeniably a better explanation than luck for his and her social success. They say she has beauty and charm, and her entertainments show originality and talent, while my wife's are commonplace and dull, in spite of the money she lavishes. But, in addition to those reasons, there are many of the upper-class people who hate me. Mine is a pretty big omelet; there is a lot of eggs in it; and, with every broken egg, somebody, usu-

ally somebody high up, felt robbed or cheated.

But I did not trust to my wife's insane hate for James's wife to keep her away from her son in his illness. I went straight to her. "I see that James is ill, or pretends to be," I said. "Probably he and his wife are plotting a reconciliation."

My wife has learned to mask her feelings behind a cold, expressionless face; but she has also learned to obey me. She often threatens, but she dares not act. I know it—and she knows that I know it.

"You will not go to him under any circumstances," I went on—"neither you nor any of the rest of us. If you disobey, I shall at once rearrange my domestic finances. Thereafter you will go to Burridge for money whenever you want to buy so much as a paper of pins."

She was white—perhaps with fury, perhaps with dread, perhaps with both. I said no more, but left her as soon as I saw that she did not intend to reply. Toward six o'clock that evening I met Walter in the main hall of the first bedroom floor. He was for hurrying by me, but I stopped him. I have an instinct which tells me unerringly when to ask a question.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

He shifted from leg to leg; he, like most people, is never quite at ease in my presence; when he is trying to conceal some specific thing from me he becomes a victim of a sort of suppressed hysteria. "To the drawing-room," he answered.

"Who's there?" said I.

He shivered, then blurted it out: "James's wife."

"Why didn't you tell me in the first place?"

He stammered: "I—wished to—to spare you—the——"

"Bah!" I interrupted. As if I could not read in his face that her coming had roused his fears of a reconciliation with James! "What are you going to say to her?"

"A message from mother," he muttered.

"Have you seen your mother, or did you make up the message?"

"A servant brought mother her card and a note. I didn't know she was in the house till mother sent for me and gave me the message to take down."

"Will your mother see her?"

"No, indeed," he replied, recovered somewhat; "mother won't have anything to do with them."

"Well, go on and deliver your message," I said; "I'll step into the little reception-room behind the drawing-room. See that you

speak loud enough for me to hear every word."

As I entered the reception-room, he entered the drawing-room. "Mother says," he said—naturally, his voice was ridiculously loud and nervous—"that she has no interest in the information you sent her, and no acquaintance with the person to whom it relates."

There was a silence so long that curiosity made me move within range of one of the long drawing-room mirrors. I saw her and Walter reflected, facing each other. She was so stationed that I had a plain view of her whole figure and of her face—the first time I had ever really seen her face. Her figure was drawn to its full height, and her bosom was rising and falling rapidly. Her head was thrown back, and upon poor Walter was beating the most contemptuous expression I ever saw coming from human eyes. No won-

der even his back showed how wilted and weak he was.

As I watched, she suddenly turned her eyes; her glance met mine in the mirror. Before I could recover and completely drive the look of amusement from my face, she had waved Walter aside and was standing in front of me. "You heard what your son said!" she exclaimed; "what do *you* say?"

I liked her looks, and especially liked her voice. It was clear. It was magnetic. It was honest. When I wish to separate sheep from goats I listen to their voices, for voices do not often lie.

"I refuse to believe that he delivered my note to—to James's mother." There was a break in her voice as she spoke James's name —it distinctly made my nerves tingle, unmoved though my mind was. "James is—is—" she went on, slowly, but not unsteadily

—"the doctors say there's no hope. And he —your son—sent me, and I am here when—when—but—what do *you* say?"

It is extraordinary what power there is in that woman's personality. If Walter hadn't been there I might have had to lash myself into a fury and insult her to save myself from being swept away. As it was, I looked at her steadily, then rang the bell. The servant came.

"Show this lady out," I said, and I bowed and went to Walter in the drawing-room. I can only imagine how she must have felt. Nothing frenzies a woman—or a man—so wildly as to be sent away from a "scene" without a single insult given to gloat over or a single insult received to bite on.

The morning paper confirmed her statement of James's condition. In fact, I didn't have to wait until then, for toward twelve that

night I heard the boys in the street bellowing an "extra" about him—that he was dying, and that none of his family had visited him. Those whose sense of justice is clouded by their feelings will be unable to understand why I felt no inclination to yield. Indeed, I do not expect to be understood in this except by those of my class—the men whose large responsibilities and duties have forced them to put wholly aside those feelings in which the ordinary run of mankind may indulge without harm. I don't deny that I had qualms. I can sympathise now with those kings and great men who have been forced to order their sons to death. And I have charged against James the pangs he then caused me.

In the superficial view it may seem inconsistent that, while I stood firm, I was shocked by my wife's insensibility. I had to do my

duty, but she should have found it impossible to do hers. I could not, of course, rebuke her and Aurora for not transgressing my orders; but all that night and all the next day I wondered at their hardness, their unwomanliness. It seemed to me another illustration of the painful side of wealth and position—their demoralising effect upon women.

The late afternoon papers announced—truthfully—a favourable change in James's condition. In defiance of the doctors' decree of death, he had rallied. "It is that wife of his," I said to myself. "Such a personality is a match for death itself." I had a sense of huge relief. Indeed, it was not until I knew James wasn't going to die that I realised how hard a fight my parental instinct had made against duty.

If I had liked Walter better I should not have been thus weak about James.

When I reached home and was about to undress for my bath and evening change, my daughter Helen knocked and entered. "Well?" said I.

She stood before me, tall and slim and golden brown—the colour is chiefly in her hair and lashes and brows, but there is a golden brown tinge in her skin; as for her eyes, they are more gold than brown, I think. Her dress reaches to her shoe-tops. With her hands clasped in front of her, she fixed her large, serious eyes upon me.

"I went to see James this morning," she said; then seemed to be waiting—not in fear, but in courage—for my vengeance to descend.

I scowled and turned away to hide the satisfaction this gave me. At least there is one female in my family with a woman's heart!

"'*Not to have told you would have been a lie.*'"

"Who put you up to it?" I demanded, sharply.

"Nobody. I heard the boys calling in the street—and—I went."

I turned upon her and looked at her narrowly. "Why do you tell me?" I asked.

"Because not to have told you would have been a lie."

She said this quite simply. I had never been so astonished before in my life. "And what of that?" said I—a shameful question under the circumstances to put to a child; but I was completely off my guard, and I couldn't believe there was not an underlying motive of practical gain.

"I do not care to lie," she answered, her eyes upon mine. I found her look hard to withstand—a new experience for me, as I can usually compel any one's gaze to shift.

"You're a good child," said I, patting her

on the shoulder. "I shall not punish you this time. You may go."

She flushed to the line of her hair, and her eyes blazed. She drew herself away from my hand and left me staring after her, more astonished than before.

A strange person—surely, a personality! She will be troublesome some day—soon.

With such beauty and such fine presence she ought to make a magnificent marriage.

I was free to take up Walter and Natalie again. After dinner I said to him, as we sat smoking: "Have you spoken to Natalie? What does she say? What date did you settle upon?"

He looked sheepishly from Burridge to Ridley, then appealingly at me. I laughed at this affectation of delicacy, but I humoured him by sending them away. "What date?" I repeated.

He twitched more than usual before he succeeded in saying: "She refuses to decide just yet."

"Why?" I demanded.

"She says she doesn't want to settle down so young."

"Young!" I exclaimed. "Why, she's twenty-one—out three seasons. What's the matter with you, that you haven't got her half frightened to death lest she'll lose you?" With all he has to offer through being my son and my principal heir he ought to be able to settle the marriage on his own terms in every respect—and to keep the whip for ever afterward.

"I don't know," he replied; "she just won't. I don't think she cares much about—about the marriage."

This was too feeble and foolish to answer. There isn't a more sensible, better-brought-up

girl in New York than Natalie. Her mother began training her in the cradle to look forward to being mistress of a great fortune. I knew she, and her mother and father too, had fixed on mine as *the* fortune as long ago as five years—she was only sixteen when I myself noted her making eyes at Jim and never losing a chance to ingratiate herself with me. Her temporising with Walter convinced me there was something wrong—and I suspected what. I went to see her, and got her to take a drive with me.

As my victoria entered the Park I began: "What's the matter, Natalie? Why won't you 'name the day'? We're old friends. You can talk to me as freely as to your own father."

"I know it," she replied; "you've always been *so* good to me—and you are *so* kind and generous." There isn't a better manner any-

where than Natalie's. She has a character as strong and fine as her face.

"I'm getting old," I went on, "and I want to see my boy settled. I want to see you my daughter, ready to take up your duties as head of my house."

"Don't try to hurry me," she said, a trace of irritation in her voice. "I'm only twenty-one. I wish to have a little pleasure before I become as serious as I'll have to be when I'm —your daughter."

I noticed that she pointedly avoided saying "Walter's wife." This confirmed my suspicion. The habit of judging everything and everybody calmly and dispassionately has made me see the members of my own family just as I see outsiders. And I couldn't blame her for balking at Walter, exasperating though it was to have her thus impede my plans.

"Is there anything wrong, Natalie?" I asked, gently. "Speak frankly to me—perhaps I can smooth it out."

"Oh, thank you!" she exclaimed. It's really delightful to see a person who can be warm-hearted, yet stop short of indiscreet and dangerous sentimentality. "But," she went on, "how can I tell *you?*"

"Is it Walter?" I asked, with a smile that invited confidence and guaranteed sympathy.

She was silent.

"Has he been disagreeable to you?"

"Oh, no!—he's kindness itself. But—I don't know—I simply can't make up my mind to marry."

She didn't add "him," but she let me see that she meant it. I saw the struggle that had been going on in her mind. She did not like him, to put it mildly. She longed to give him up. Every time she thought of him she felt

that she must. Every time she thought of me and my fortune, and the position I would give my son's wife, she felt that she couldn't.

"Have you talked with your mother about this?" I knew what a clear-headed, far-sighted woman Matt Bradish's wife was—she's married off three children, all splendidly, not to speak of her catching Matt.

"If she doesn't stop nagging me she'll drive me to marry—somebody else," said Natalie, her voice trembling with anger. "I'll kick the traces, sure as fate."

"But I'm sure you don't care for this somebody else," I said, positively. I knew the chap—a painter. I can't conceive why people of our sort permit youths of that kind to roam among their marriageable daughters. Even a sensible, well-trained girl, with all youth's disdain of poverty and adoration of wealth, has

her foolish moments like the rest of us. "I'm sure you don't," I repeated.

"But at least I don't—don't—*dislike* him."

I was thoroughly alarmed. I saw that she was actually trying to goad me into anger against her; that she was riding for a fall; wished to force herself into a position where marriage with Walter would be made impossible. The poor child hadn't the heart to refuse the prize which she lacked the stomach to take; she wished to make me snatch it from her. But the Bradish connection is far too important to my plans. I haven't had my hand on my temper-rein for forty years without being able to control my feelings—when I wish. Besides, it was Walter that she practically said she disliked; and I can see how she might—I certainly shouldn't love him if it were not my duty to do so.

"You've got your choice, my child," said I,

"of being married for your money or of marrying into as enviable a position as there is in New York. I *know* you're too sensible to let trifles obscure your judgment."

"I simply *won't* be driven!" she retorted. "Why should I bother? I've got a little something in my own right."

"Just enough to make you realise the possibilities of wealth," I replied—"just enough to spur your ambition." I began to watch her face keenly. "And you sha'n't have to wait for your triumph," I said, and I made an impressive pause before I slowly added: "I'm going to settle an annual income of a quarter of a million on you for life."

I saw her face soften. The colour came and went in her delicate skin.

"I have tested you, Natalie," I went on. "I know you are the woman I want as my daughter. It will make me happy to see you

outshining them all, as you will. And I'll make you absolutely independent of Walter—of me, even."

She was looking at me with glistening eyes. I saw that I had thrilled her through and through. Profoundly to move a human being, one must touch his or her deepest passion—his or her particular form of vanity.

"Won't you, Natalie?" I pleaded, "won't you make me happy? Won't you let me give you what your beauty and refinement demand?"

She looked at me sweetly—a look of surrender.

I knew I had won. Then her eyes were twinkling, and instantly I grasped the reason. We both burst out laughing. It certainly was amusing—a father wooing and winning for his son where all his son's efforts had made his cause only more hopeless. And throughout,

"'You will marry on the sixteenth of April, at noon. Get yourself ready.'"

what a quaint reversal of old-established, generally accepted ideas of love and marriage! But—"Other times, other customs!"

I dropped Natalie at Mrs. Kirkby's and went back to my study. I rang the bell and sent the answering servant for Walter. Presently I looked up from my work—he was standing before me, shifting his eyes from point to point, his body from leg to leg.

"You will marry on the sixteenth of April, at noon," said I. "Get yourself ready."

And I dismissed him with a wave of my hand.

It would be sheer madness for me to keep my apparent promise, made, in the heat of my earnestness, merely to save Natalie from her own folly, and therefore not really binding. To give her a quarter of a million a year absolutely and for life would be to invite disaster —no, to compel it. She'd be in the divorce

courts ridding herself of Walter within two years.

She shall have the substance of my promise —I shall do everything for her. But she must not have the mere letter, which would injure her, would tempt her to wreck her life and my plans and the future of her children. It was wise to promise; it would be wrong to fulfil. No, I must retain full control, must keep my steadying hand firmly upon her. And, after all, what did I pledge?

I was careful to phrase it delicately, for I'm always extremely particular in my choice and use of words at crucial moments. I was careful to say, "an annual income of a quarter of a million." All turns upon the word "an"—if it were "the," my phrase would mean something entirely different.

I shall settle two hundred and fifty thousand on her on the day they marry—after the

ceremony. I shall protest that a quarter of a million in all was what I meant—and I certainly did, though I don't here deny that I may have meant for her to think I meant a quarter of a million a year. She will be—not in what you would call a pleasant state of mind. But what can she do? When she shall have calmed down, she'll probably give me the benefit of the doubt, tell herself she misunderstood me, rail at herself for her folly, and then —behave herself.

True, she's shrewd, and her parents, too. They'll try legally to commit me *before* the wedding. But surely I can circumvent them.

There's "a way out." There *always* is!

IV

It was necessary for me to find, calculating liberally, about eight million dollars—the four millions definitely promised to my university, a quarter of a million to redeem my promise to Natalie, a million properly to set Walter and her going in an independent establishment, two millions to provide them with the income to maintain it, and about half a million for my own and my family's regular annual expenses. Further, an investment of twelve millions that had been sending its seven per cent. securely and regularly for the past nine years was about to fall in through the payment of the debt it represented—I could write a volume on the harassments and exasperations of hunting investments. Finally, I was hoping that Aurora would marry Horton

Kirkby, which might mean a million, perhaps several millions, more, if he should demand a dowry.

The situation commanded me to plan and carry through some new enterprise which would afford me a safe investment for my released twelve millions and in addition would net me enough to cover well the other demands upon me. Years ago—as soon as I had my first million put by—I resolved that I would never for any purpose whatsoever subtract a penny either from the principal or from the income of my fortune. Gifts of all kinds, expenses of all kinds, outgo of every description, must come from new sources of revenue; my fortune and its income and the surplus over the previous year's outgo must be treated as a sacred fund of which I was merely the trustee. That rule has put me often in straits, has forced me to many money-making measures

that in the narrow view would be called relentless. But to it the world owes my highest achievements . as a financier and industrial leader, and to it I owe the bulk of my fortune.

The brain earns in vain, however hugely, if the hands do not hoard; and, thanks to my rule, my hands have been like those valves which open only to pressure from without and seal the more tightly the greater the pressure from within.

I could not break my rule. Yet I must properly marry my children and must keep my promise to my university; and to have left twelve millions of capital idle would have been to show myself unworthy of the responsibilities of great wealth. I was thus literally driven to one of those large public services which are so venomously criticised by the small and the envious. Every action of no matter what kind produces both good and bad conse-

quences. To wait until one could act without any unfortunate results to anybody would be to sit motionless, even to refrain from eating. The most that conscience demands is that one shall do only those things which in his best judgment will show a balance on the side of good.

I had long had my eye on certain mines and appendant manufactories situated at several points on two of my three lines of railway. They were doing well enough in a small way; but I knew that, combined under the direction of such a brain as mine, they would become immensely more profitable. I now saw no alternative to taking them and making them as valuable and as useful as they were clearly intended to be. In preparation for the *coup* I withdrew from the directory of my third railway, substituting one of my unrecognised agents, himself a millionaire in a small way;

and I put my stock in the names of others of my agents and did not deny the report that I had ceased to have any financial interest in the road. Thus I was in a position to alter its freight rates without the change being traced to me by those prying meddlers who are so active in their interference in other people's business nowadays. When it was universally believed that I no longer had any connection with my third road, and that it had passed to a control hostile to me, I ordered it to give large secret rebates upon all freight of the kind I wished to affect.

The result was that the owners of those mines and factories, being compelled to ship by my two other railways, which stiffly maintained rates, were no longer able to compete. Their competitors, shipping by my third line, easily undersold them with the assistance of the secret rebate. They came in a stew and

sweat to my two presidents and said that secret rebates by the third line were the cause of their impending ruin. My two presidents agreed with them and opened a fierce war of words upon my third president—him whom they and every one else thought hostile to me. He retorted with a sweeping denial of their charges. "It is nothing new in a world of self-excuse," said he, "for incompetent business men to attribute their misfortunes to the wickedness of others instead of to the real source—their own incapacity and incompetence." And so the sham battle raged by mail and newspaper interview. But—the mine and factory owners I was gunning for got nothing tangible out of it. Their competitors continued to undersell them; their business rapidly languished.

When I saw that they were in a sufficiently humble frame of mind I came to their relief. I sent word to them that, as I had a warm

personal feeling for the towns dependent upon the prosperity of their works, I would take a hand in their languishing businesses if they wished and would do my utmost to maintain the apparently hopeless battle.

My offer was received with enthusiastic gratitude—as it should have been; for, while it is true that I had precipitated the crisis which their antiquated methods of doing business would have inevitably brought sooner or later, is it not also true that I have the right to do what I wish with my own? And are not those two railways, and the third, as well, my own? But for the present rampant spirit of contemptuous disregard for the rights of private property and the impudent intrusions into private business it would not have been necessary for me to disguise myself and act like a housebreaker in order to exercise my plain rights—yes, and do my plain duty; for

can there be any question in any judicial mind that it is the duty of men of the commercial and financial genius which I possess to use it to bring the resources of the country to their highest efficiency?

After some negotiations I got control of the properties that I needed and that needed me. I agreed to pay altogether fifteen millions for a controlling share in them—about half what it would have cost me before I brought my rebate artillery to bear, but about twice what control would have cost had I battered away for six months longer. I might have accomplished my purpose much more cheaply; but I am not a hard man, and I do not flatter myself when I say that conscience is the dominant factor in all my operations. I felt that in the circumstances the owners were entitled to consideration and that to make my victory complete would be an abuse

of power. It is hardly necessary to add that my generosity had its prudent side, as has all rational generosity. To have assailed the properties too long in order to get them cheap would have permanently impaired their value; to have wiped out the owners utterly would have caused a profound, possibly dangerous, public resentment against my class, too many members of which had been guilty of the grave blunder of using their power without regard to public opinion. But while prudence was a factor in my general settlement, the main factor was, as I have said, conscience. Not the narrow conscientiousness of ordinary men, which is three parts ignorance, two parts cowardice, and five parts envy—for is it not usually roused only when the acts of others are to be judged?

When my offer was accepted I organised a combination to take over the properties, and

I paid for them with its guaranteed bonds and preferred stock. Then I countermanded the order for a heavy secret rebate against their products and, instead, issued an order for a small secret rebate in their favour—letting the public think I had by some secret audacious move regained control of my third railroad. The combination's business boomed, its stock went up, and all that it was necessary for me to sell was eagerly bought. What with the bonds and the stocks I sold, I had gained control without its having cost me a penny. It is not vanity, is it, when I call that genius?

But control is not possession, and these properties are worth possessing. I must possess them. It is not just that so large a part of the profits of my labour—of my act of creation—should go to others.

I have anticipated somewhat. The operation took a considerable time, but not long in

view of the great results. When one has my vast resources and my peculiar talents, men and events *move,* obstacles are blown up, roads are thrust swift and straight through the thickest tangles, and the objective is reached before feeble folk have got beyond the stage of debate and diplomacy. Still, nearly a year elapsed between the start and the finish, and many things happened which were the reverse of satisfactory—most of them, as usual, in my domestic affairs.

I had got the enterprise only fairly under way when the invitations for Walter's wedding were issued. Natalie's father had seen me several times and had shown his determination to intervene in the matter of her dowry by bringing up the subject at our business conferences whenever he could force the smallest opening. Like all my associates, from capitalist to clerk, he is in awe of me. I see

to it that in the velvet glove there shall always be holes through which the iron hand can be plainly seen. That often saves me the exertion of using it. An iron hand, once it has an established reputation, is mightier when merely seen than when felt. He would always begin by some vague, halting reference to my promised generosity.

"A royal gift, Galloway!" he would say, enthusiastically. "You certainly are a king, much more powerful than those European figureheads."

But he never had the courage to speak the exact sum, the "quarter of a million dollars a year," that I saw in his hungry, glistening, hopeful, yet doubtful eyes. And I would not take the hint to discuss the gift further, but would put him off by showing how completely I was absorbed in the forming combination. Probably at the time he was letting his greed

blind him into believing I would make as big a fool of myself as I had rashly promised and so was fearful of irritating me in any way. Two days before the wedding invitations went out he forced himself on me for lunch. I saw determination written in his face—determination to compel me to something definite about that "quarter of a million a year" for his daughter. So, at the first pause in the conversation, I played my card.

"Matt," said I, "I really must arrange the formalities for that settlement on *our* daughter. I'll have my lawyer—will the latter part of the week do? He's up to his eyes in the combination just now."

Bradish looked enormously relieved. He could hardly keep from laughing outright with delight—the miserable old seller of his own children. "Oh, I wasn't disturbing myself," he replied; "your word's good enough,

though, of course, you'd—we'd—want the thing in legal shape—before the marriage."

"Of course," said I, waving the matter aside as settled, and beginning again on the affairs of the combination. I had let him into it on attractive terms and had put him on my board of directors. He revelled in these favours as the mere foretaste of his gains from the powerful commercial alliance he was making through his daughter.

Out went the invitations—and the first danger point was rounded.

On the following Sunday night I left suddenly in my private car for an inspection of the new properties. Every day of nearly two weeks was full to its last minute. When I returned to New York five days before the wedding, I was utterly worn out. I went to bed and sent for my doctor—Hanbury.

He is one of those highly successful New

York physicians who are famed among the laity for their skill in medicine, and in the profession for their skill at hocus-pocus. He is a specialist in what I may call the diseases of the idle rich—boredom, exaggeration of a slight discomfort into a frightful torture, craving for fussy personal attentions, abnormal fear of death, etc. He is a professional "funny man," a discreet but depraved gossip, and a tireless listener—and is handsome and well-mannered. He has a soft, firm touch—on pulse and on purse. The women adore him—when they want to rest, they complain of nervousness and send for him to prescribe for them. One of his most successful and lucrative lines of treatment is helping wives to loosen the purse-strings of husbands by agitating their sympathies and fears. He never irritates or frightens his clients with unpleasant truths. He doesn't tell the men to stop

eating and drinking and the women to stop gadding. He gives them digestion-tablets and nerve-tonics and sends them on agreeable excursions to Europe. Of all the swarm of parasites that live upon rich New Yorkers none keeps up a more dignified front than does Hanbury. I've found him useful in social matters, and, as I've paid him liberally, he is greatly in my debt.

"Hanbury," I said, from my bed, "I'm a very sick man."

"Nonsense—only tired," replied he. "A good sleep, a few days' rest——"

I looked at him steadily. "I tell you I'm desperately ill, and here's my son's wedding only five days away!"

"You'll be all right by that time. I'll guarantee to fix you up, good as new."

I continued to look at him steadily. "No, I sha'n't—it's impossible. And I sha'n't be

able to transact any business whatever. I mustn't be allowed to see even the members of my own family. Do you understand?"

He glanced curiously at me, then reflected, twisting the end of his Van Dyck beard. He looked at my tongue, listened to my heart, felt my pulse, and took my temperature. "I'm afraid you're right," he said, gravely; "I see you're worse off than I thought. We must have a trained nurse."

"But I must have you, too," said I. "You must move into the house, and I don't want anybody but you to attend me."

"Very well. You know I'm at your service. I'll—*superintend* the nurse."

"Thank you, Hanbury," said I. "You understand me perfectly. I can trust you. And —something might happen to me—I'll write you a check for ten thousand at once—a little personal matter quite apart from your bill."

Hanbury reddened. I think he thought he was hesitating. But when he spoke it was to say: "Thank you—if you wish—but I'm sure I'll pull you through."

"I shall be able to see *no one*," I went on. "But I've set my heart on my son's marrying—the wedding *must not be put off*. I'm sure it would kill me if there were to be a delay."

"I understand." His eyes were smiling; the rest of his face was grave.

"And not a word of the serious nature of my illness must get into the papers. You will deny any rumour of that kind, should there be occasion. My stocks must not be affected—and they would be, and the whole list——"

"And the prosperity of the country," said Hanbury.

This illness of mine, while primarily for smoothly carrying through Walter's marriage, was really inspired by an actual physical need.

I had long felt that the machine needed rest. The necessity of preventing Natalie from making a fool of herself gave me the opportunity to combine rest with accomplishment. Before shutting myself in I had put my affairs into such shape that my lieutenants and secretaries could look after them. I dozed and slept and listened to the nurse or Hanbury reading, or talked with Hanbury. The nurse had little to do—and I suspect could do little. What Hanbury did not do was done by my stupid old Pigott, half crazed with fear lest I should die and he should find that he was right in suspecting he had not been handsomely remembered in my will. Hanbury's manner was so perfect that, had I not felt robustly well on long sleep, short diet, and no annoyances, I might have been convinced and badly frightened. My family — Hanbury managed to keep them from thinking it neces-

sary to try to impress me with their affection for me by pretending wild alarm. He had most difficulty with poor little Helen—not so very little any more, though I think of her as a baby still. It's astonishing how unspoiled she is—another proof of her unusuality.

On the third day Hanbury said: "Your wife tells me she must see you, and that, if she doesn't, the wedding will surely be postponed."

"It's impossible to admit her—when I'm just entering the crisis," replied I. "Tell her —you know how to do it—that, if Bradish acts up, she shall as a last resort go to Burridge, who will let him see my will. And can't you call—don't you think you had better call—some one—say Doctor Lowndes—in consultation?"

He reflected for several minutes. "I'll call Lowndes," he said. "You couldn't possibly

have picked out a better man." And he looked at me with the admiration I deserved.

"Let Bradish know you've done it," I added.

"Certainly," he replied, in a tone which assured me he knew what to do at the right time.

Lowndes came—and went. A quarter of an hour before he came Hanbury gave me a dose of some strong-smelling, yellow-black medicine. The blood bounded through my arteries and throbbed with fierce violence in my veins; I sank into a sort of stupor. I dimly realised that another man was in the room with Hanbury and was making a hasty examination of me. It must have been an amusing farce. Lowndes indorsed Hanbury, and—yesterday I paid Lowndes's bill for twelve hundred dollars.

I fell asleep while he was still solemnly studying Hanbury's temperature chart. When I awoke the latter was reading by the

shaded electric light on the night-stand. I felt somewhat dazed and tired, but otherwise extremely comfortable.

"What news?" I asked.

"Your wife says the wedding is to go on—a quiet ceremony at Mr. Bradish's house. I fear I gave him the impression that, while there was no immediate danger, you would——"

"Hardly pull through?"

"I fear so."

That amused me. "Did he see my will?" I asked.

"I believe he did. I think that was what decided him."

And well it might, for not only had he read that I had willed three-fourths of my entire estate to my son Walter, but also he had read a schedule of my chief holdings which I had folded in with the will in anticipation of this very contingency. It must have amazed him

—it must have stirred every atom in his avaricious old body—to see how much richer I am than is generally supposed. No, it would have been impossible for him to take any chances on losing my principal heir for his daughter after that will and that schedule had burned themselves into his brain.

I've not the slightest doubt that he knew his daughter would never get the dowry she was dreaming of, for he is a sensible, practical man. If I did not know how glibly young people talk and think of huge sums of money nowadays I'd not believe Natalie herself silly enough ever seriously to imagine me giving her outright the enormous sum necessary to produce a quarter of a million a year.

Hanbury urged that Walter and his bride go down to the country near town, assuring them he could give them several hours' warning of a turn for the worse. The change in

the wedding plans had started a report that I was dangerously ill. As the best possible denial of this stock-depressing rumour they yielded to Hanbury's representations.

I ordered Hanbury to give it out that I was much better, as soon as I heard that the marriage ceremony had been performed, and I began to mend so rapidly that he, in alarm for his reputation, begged me to restrain myself. "I want people to say I worked a cure," he said, "not to say I worked a miracle—and then wink." In two weeks I was far enough advanced for Walter and Natalie to sail on the trip which my illness had delayed.

I was now free to give my entire attention to my down-town affairs. My long rest had made me young again and had given me fresh points of view upon nearly every department of my activity. Also I found that my success with my big combination and my stupendous

public gift had enormously increased my reputation. Half one's power comes from within himself, the other half from the belief of other people in him. My star was approaching the zenith, and I saw it. I always work incessantly, regardless of the position of my star—no man who accomplishes great things ever takes his mind off his work.

Not that I am one of those who disbelieve in luck. Luck is the tide. When it is with me, I reach port—if I row hard and steer straight. When it is against me, I must still row hard and steer straight to keep off the rocks and be ready for the turn.

At my suggestion, my down-town confidential man intimated to a few of the principal men in the towns dependent on my mines and factories that it would be gracious and fitting to show in some public way their appreciation of what I had done. Usually these demon-

strations are extremely perfunctory, betraying on the surface that they are got up either by the man honoured or out of a reluctant sense of decency and a lively sense of the right way to get more favours. But in this instance the suggestion met with a spontaneous and universal response. All that my agents had to do in the matter was to organise the enthusiasm and relieve the entertainment committee of the heavier expenses—such as railway transportation, catering, music, and carriages. The people did the rest.

They regarded me as their saviour—and so I was. Could I not have destroyed them had I willed it? Was I not inaugurating for them a prosperity such as the former small-fry owners of those properties had neither the genius nor the resources to create?

The trouble with those who criticise the morality of the actions of men like me is that

they are trying to study astronomy with a microscope.

Jack Ridley and I fell into an argument along these lines one evening after dinner, and the only answer he could make to me was, "Then a murderer, on the same principle, could say: 'I'm killing this man so that his family, to whom he's really of no use, may get his life insurance and live comfortably and happily. I'm not doing it because I want what he has in his pockets—though I'll take it partially to repay me for risking my neck.' " I couldn't help smiling—he put it so plausibly. I should have reasoned precisely like that twenty years ago. But my mind and my conscience have grown since then. I no longer look out upon life through the twisted glass of the windows of the House of Have-not; I see it through the clear French-plate of the House of Have.

When the programme for my testimonial was perfected, a joint delegation from the city governments, the chambers of commerce, and the ministers' associations of the five towns waited upon me to invite me to a grand joint reception and banquet to be held in the largest town. They invited my wife, also, but I did not permit her to accept. In the first place, she had done nothing to entitle her to divide the honour with me; and, in the second place, she would have had her head even more utterly turned than it now is. On the appointed day I went up in my private car, taking Burridge and Jack Ridley with me. I had outlined to Ridley what I wished to say, and he had expanded it into the necessary three speeches. In the main he caught the spirit of my ideas very cleverly. The only editing I had to do was in striking out a lot of self-deprecatory rubbish which would have

made me minimise my part in the new era for the towns. A man is a fool who assists his enemies to rob him of what is justly his. How could I expect any one to have a proper respect for me if I did not show that I have a proper respect for myself?

Where this so-called modesty is genuine it is a dangerous weakness; where it is false, it is hypocritical cowardice.

As the train carrying my car drew into the station I stared amazed, much to the delight of the reception committee, which had joined me at the station below. Before me I saw ten or twelve thousand people. The schoolgirls, each dressed in white and carrying flowers, occupied the front space—there must have been a thousand of them.

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" I exclaimed.

"There hasn't been such an outpouring of the people," said a gentleman who stood near

me, "since Mr. Blaine passed through here when he was a candidate for the presidency."

I noted that several of the committee grew red and frowned at him. Afterward Ridley told me why—the Blaine demonstration had led them to expect that he would carry the county by an overwhelming majority; instead, he had lost it by a "landslide" vote against him.

When the train stopped, a battery of artillery began to fire a salute of one hundred guns. Several bands struck up, the children sang "The Star-Spangled Banner," and the crowd burst into frenzies of cheering. I was overcome with emotion and the tears streamed down my cheeks. At that the cheering was more tremendous and I saw many of the women and little girls crying.

I entered the carriage drawn by six horses, the mayor of the town beside me, and the march to the Court House began. I had

given my workingmen a holiday and my excursion trains had poured the people of the four other towns into this fifth town, about quadrupling its population for the day. The streets were therefore thronged from the house-walls to the edges of a lane just wide enough for the procession. The houses were draped with bunting; arches of evergreens and bunting, each bearing my name and words of welcome, spanned the route of march at frequent intervals. I stood all the way, my hat in hand. As I bowed, the cheers answered me. The bells in all the towers and steeples rang, cannon boomed, and the procession, in five divisions, each with a band and militia, wound in my wake. My heart swelled with triumph and with grateful appreciation. I fully realised myself for the first time in my life.

As I have said, I always did have a self-

respecting opinion of myself, even when an over-nice and inexperienced conscience was annoying me with its hair-splittings. As I have grown older, and have seen the inferiority of other men and the superiority of my own mind and judgment, naturally my early opinion has been strengthened and deepened. But on that day I realised how my own sight of myself had been obscured by a too close view. My domestic exasperations, the necessary disagreeableness and pettiness of so many of the details of my great projects, the triviality of my routine of business and its harassments—all these had combined to make me belittle my own stature and bulk. On that day I saw myself as others see me. I felt a great uplifting, a supreme disdain for those who oppose me or cavil at me, a high and firm resolve to devote myself thereafter more confidently and more boldly to my plans.

But—the more splendid the crown, the more splitting the headache.

At the banquet in the evening I observed that the enthusiasm of the daytime was not being sustained. I was amazed and irritated by the large number of vacant places at the tables, when my agents had been instructed judiciously and quietly to distribute free tickets should there not be a sufficient number of persons able to pay the five dollars a plate we were charging for a nine-dollar dinner. I was puzzled by the nervous uneasiness of those who sat with me at the table of honour and who had been all geniality a few hours before. The speeches seemed to me halting and inadequate—my own speech, well calculated to rouse local pride, was received with a faint hand-clapping which soon died away. After the dinner I, Burridge, and Ridley drove alone to the station. It was filled with weary

throngs taking the returning excursion trains. They did not cheer me; they only stared curiously.

When we were on our way back to New York I wished to discuss the triumph with my two companions, but Burridge was dumb and Ridley morose. In the morning I called for the New York dailies; they were haltingly produced. Imagine my amazement when I saw, in many kinds of type, now jubilant, now regretful, now apologetic headlines, all agreeing that my reception was a *fiasco*. Only my stanch —— printed the truth, and it laid entirely too much stress upon the "act of malicious and mendacious demagoguery." That act was: Some enemy of mine had discovered inside facts as to my manipulation of freight rates to get control of the mines and factories, and, late in the afternoon, in the interval between the reception and the banquet, a New

York newspaper containing what purported to be a full account of my machinations had been hawked about the streets, and was read by everybody—except me.

I do not here deny that the basic facts were practically true as printed. But the worst possible colour was given to them, and the worst possible motives of rapacity and conscienceless cruelty were ascribed to me. Instead of showing that I was like a general who sacrifices a comparative few in order that he may save millions and advance a great cause, the wretched rag held me up as a swindler and robber—worse, as an assassin!

I understood all, and sympathised with my hosts, the people of those five towns, in their embarrassment. As their local newspapers, which I got the next day, assured me, they did not believe the slanderous story. But I can readily see how nervous it must have made

them. It is fortunate for them that they had the good sense to discern the truth. Had I been insulted, I should have taken a terrible revenge, even though it had cost me several hundred thousand dollars.

While I was reading those New York papers, Jack Ridley was smoking a cigar at the opposite side of the breakfast-table. When I had finished, I spoke. "Did you see that newspaper yesterday?" I demanded, my rage hardly able to wait upon his answer before bursting.

Ridley nodded.

"And Burridge?"

"Yes—he saw it."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Bad news will always keep."

I shouted for Burridge, and, when he came, ordered him into a seat. "At every step in my career I've been harassed and hampered by

petty minds," I said—"not among my enemies, for there they have been a help, but among my employees and servants of every kind. How often have I told both of you never to think for me? I don't pay you to *think*—I pay you to *do* what *I* think. Had you told me I could have met this slander when and where it showed itself and would have choked it to death. As it is, everybody except you two believes I knew and was silent. Fortunately my reputation is strong enough to compel them to put a decent interpretation on my silence. But no thanks to you! I discharge you both."

Burridge rose and went to the other part of the car—and I did not see him again. Ridley fell to whimpering and crying, and for old friendship's sake, and because the poor devil is useful in his way, I took him back at two-thirds his former pay. His gratitude was

really touching—sometimes I think he's honestly fond of me, though no doubt the wages and what he has free enter into it. He's one of those fellows who actually enjoy licking the hand they fear. Burridge did not try to get himself reinstated. Probably he thought himself indispensable and held aloof in the belief that I would beg him to come back. But I was on the whole glad to get rid of him. He was too much of an alleged gentleman for the work he had to do. There's room for only one gentleman in my establishment.

Into his place I put a young chap named Cress who had been near me at the office for several years and had shown loyalty, energy, and discretion. He was not at his new work a week before my wife came to me in a hot temper and demanded that he be dismissed. "He has insulted me!" she said, her head rearing and her nose in the air.

"How?" I asked; "I can't discharge a faithful servant on a mere caprice."

"He has dared to question my accounts," she replied, in her grandest manner.

This was interesting! "But that's his business," said I; "that's what I pay him for."

"To insult your wife?"

"To guard my money."

"Mr. Burridge never found it necessary to insult me in guarding your money. He ventured to assume that as your wife I was to be respected, and——"

"Burridge had no right to assume any such thing," I said. "He was nothing but my machine—my cash-register. I instructed him, again and again, to assume that everybody was dishonest. A ridiculous mess I should make of my affairs if I did not keep a most rigid system of checks upon everybody. You must remember, my dear, that I am beset by

hungry fellows, many of them clever and courageous, waiting for me to relax my vigilance so that they can swoop on my fortune. I'm moving through a swarm of parasites who prey upon my prey or upon me, and the larger I become the larger the swarm and the more dangerous. I must have eyes everywhere. You should be reasonable."

She gave me a curious look. "And you're so sublimely unconscious of yourself!" she said. "That is why you are so terrible. But it saves you from being repulsive." I was instantly on the alert. Flattery tickles me—and tickling wakes me. "Can't you see, you great monster of a man," she went on, "that you mustn't treat your wife and children as if they were parasites?"

"They must keep their accounts with my fortune straight," said I.

To that point I held while she cajoled,

stormed, denounced, threatened, wept. The longer she worked upon me the more set I became, for the more firmly I was convinced that there had been some sort of chicanery at which that weak fool Burridge had winked. She was greatly agitated—and not with anger—when she left me, though she tried to conceal it. I sent for Cress and ordered him to hunt out Burridge's accounts and vouchers for the past fifteen years, or ever since I put my domestic finances on the sound basis of business. I told him to take everything to an expert accountant.

After two days' search he reported to me that he could find accounts for only nine years back and vouchers for only the last three years. The rest had been lost or deliberately destroyed—contrary to my emphatic orders. One of the curses of large affairs with limited time and imbecile agents is the vast number

of ragged ends hanging out. I never take up any part of my business after having disregarded it for a while without finding it ravelled and ravelling. A week later I had the accountant's report, reviewed by Cress. I read it with amazement. I sent at once for my wife. I ordered Cress out of the room as soon as she entered, for I wished to spare her all unnecessary humiliation.

"Madam," said I, without the slightest heat, "you will kindly make over to me all my money and property which you have got by juggling your accounts. It's about half a million, I think—Cress and I may presently discover that it is more. But, whatever it is, it must all be made over."

"I have nothing that belongs to you," she replied, as calm as I, and facing me steadily.

"We won't quibble," said I, determined to

keep my temper. "All you have must be made over. I give you until—day after to-morrow morning."

"I shall answer then as I answer now," she said—and I saw that she felt cornered and would fight to the last.

"I've often heard," I went on, "that some wives take advantage of their husbands' carelessness and confidence to—to—I shall not use the proper word—I shall say to *reserve* from the household and personal allowances by over-charges, by conspiring with tradespeople of all kinds, by making out false bills, by substitution of jewels——"

"That is true enough," she interrupted. "Women who thought they were marrying men and find they are married to monsters sometimes do imitate their husbands' methods in a small, feeble way, and for self-defence and for the defence of their children, and I'm

one of those women. I'm ashamed of it—you've not hardened me beyond shame yet. But in another sense I'm not ashamed of it—I'm——"

"We won't quarrel," said I; "I'm not the keeper of your conscience. All I say is—disgorge!"

"I've nothing that belongs to you," she repeated.

"Then you deny that you have sto—" I began.

"I deny nothing. I have learned much from you since you ceased to be a man, but I've not yet learned how to educate my conscience into being my pander."

I smiled and pointed significantly at the cooked accounts. "Yes—here's the evidence how sensitive your conscience is and how it must trouble you!" I couldn't resist saying this. It was a mistake, as retorts always are

—for it was the spark that touched off her temper.

"My conscience does trouble me!" she blazed out—"troubles me because I have remained in this house all these years. I have permitted myself and my children to become corrupted. I have been content with merely trying to provide against your going mad with vanity and greediness, and turning against your own children. I am guilty—though I stayed first through weakness and love of you—guilty because afterward it was weakness and love of what your wealth bought that kept me. But I thought it was my duty to my children. I should have gone and taken them with me. I should have gone the day I learned you had stolen Judson's——"

In my fury I almost struck her. The very mention of Judson's name makes me irresponsible. But she did not flinch. "Yes," she went

on, "and if you persist in your demand, if you don't call off that miserable spy of yours, I tell you, James Galloway, I'll walk out of your house publicly and never set foot in it again!"

"After you have disgorged," said I, getting and keeping myself well in hand.

"I shall go," she continued, "and what will become of your social ambitions, of your pet scheme to marry Aurora to Horton Kirkby, of your public reputation? If I go, the whole country shall ring with the scandal of it."

I hadn't thought of that! I saw instantly that she had me. With a scandal of that kind public, it would be impossible to marry Aurora into one of the oldest and proudest and richest families in New York. I knew just how it would impress old Mrs. Kirkby, who, if her notion of her social position were correct,

would find all New York on its knees as she took the air in her victoria. Then there was Natalie—it would surely stir her up to do something disagreeable when she learns that she isn't going to get the quarter of a million a year she's dreaming of.

I studied my wife carefully as she stood facing me, and afterward, while we went on with our talk, and saw that she meant just what she said, I pretended to believe her statement that she hadn't more than a small part of her "commissions" left—indeed, it may be so. With this pretence as a basis, I let her off from disgorging. "But," said I, "hereafter Cress manages the household—*all* the accounts —I can't trust you."

"As you will," she replied, affecting indifference. Probably she was so relieved by my consenting to drop the past that she was glad to concede the future.

If women were as large as they are crafty, it would be the men who would stay at home and mind the babies. As it is they can only irritate and hamper the men. It is fortunate for me that women have never had influence over me. I'd not be where I am if I had taken them seriously.

Soon after this shocking discovery there happened what was, in some respects, the most unpleasant incident of my life.

One afternoon, as the heating apparatus in my sitting-room was out of order, I went down to the library and was lying on the lounge thinking out some of the day's business complications. I was presently disturbed by the sound of excited voices—my wife's and my daughter Helen's. The noise came from the small reception-room adjoining the library. It is very annoying to hear voices, especially agitated voices, and not to be able to distin-

guish the words. I rose and went quietly to the connecting door and listened.

"I won't have it, Helen!" my wife was saying. "You know that is the most exclusive dancing class in New York."

"I don't care; I shall never go again—*never!*" The child's voice was as resolute as it was angry.

"Helen, you must not speak in that way to your mother!" replied my wife. "Unless you give a good reason, you must go—and there can't be any reason."

"Don't ask me, mother!" she pleaded.

"You must tell me why. I insist."

There was a long silence, then Helen said: "I can't tell you any more than that some of the girls—insult me."

"What *do* you mean?" exclaimed my wife.

"Several of them turn their backs on me, and won't speak to me, and look at me—*oh!*"

That exclamation came in a burst of fury. "And they sneer at me to the boys—and some of them won't speak to me, either."

There was another silence. Then my wife said: "You must expect that, Helen. So many are envious of your father's—of his wealth, that they try to take their spite out upon us. But you must have pride. The way to deal with such a situation is to face it—to——"

All the blame upon *me!* I could not endure it. I put the door very softly and very slightly ajar and returned to the lounge. From there I called out: "Don't forget the other reason, madam, while you're teaching your child to respect her parents." Then I rose and went into the reception-room.

Helen was white as a sheet. My wife was smiling a little—satirically. "Eavesdropping?" she said—apparently not in the least

disturbed at my having heard her insidious attack upon me.

"I could not help overhearing your quarrel," I replied, "and I felt it was time for me to speak. No doubt your lack of skill in social matters is the chief cause of this outrage upon Helen. Of what use is it for me to toil and struggle when you cannot take advantage of what my achievement ought to make so easy for you?"

"Father—" interrupted Helen.

"Your mother is right," I said, turning to her. "You must go to the class. In a short time all these unpleasant incidents will be over. If any of those children persist, you will give me their names. I think I know how to bring their fathers to terms, if your mother is unable to cope with their mothers."

"Father," Helen repeated, "it wasn't on *her* account that they—they——"

This exasperated me afresh. "Your mother has trained you well, I see," said I. "Now—I tell you that what you say is——"

She started to her feet, her eyes flashing, her breath coming fast. "I'll tell you why I came home to-day and said I'd never go there again. I was talking to Herbert Merivale at the dance, this afternoon, and his sister Nell and Lottie Stuyvesant were sitting near, and Lottie said, loud, so that Herbert and I would hear: 'I don't see why your brother talks to her. None of the very nice boys and girls will have anything to do with her, you know. How can we when she's—she's——' "

Helen stopped, her face flushed, and her head dropped. My wife said: "Go on, Helen; what was it?"

" 'When she's the—the—daughter of a—*thief!*' "

I was so overwhelmed that I fairly stag-

gered into a chair. Helen darted to me and knelt beside me. "And I *won't* go there again! I didn't show her that I was cut. I didn't feel cut. I only felt what a great, noble father I have, and how low and contemptible all those girls and boys and their parents are. I stayed until nearly the last. But I'll never go again. You won't ask me to, will you, father?"

I patted her on the shoulder. It was impossible for me to answer her. Whether through fear of me or to gain her point with her child, my wife concealed the triumph she must have felt, and said: "The more reason for going, Helen. Where is your pride? If you should stay away, they would say it was because you were ashamed——"

"But that isn't the reason," interrupted Helen. "And I don't care what *they* think!" she added, scornfully.

I have never been in such a rage as possessed me at that moment. I felt an insane impulse to rush out and strangle and torture those envious wretches who were seeking to revenge themselves for having been worsted in the encounter with me down-town by humiliating my children. But the matter of Helen's holding the social advantage we had gained when we got the Merivales to put her in that class was too important to be neglected for a burst of impotent fury. I joined with her mother, and finally we brought her round to see that she must keep on at the class and must make a fight to overthrow the *clique* of traducers of her father. When she saw it her enthusiasm was roused, and—well, she can't fail to win with her cleverness and good looks, and with me to back her up.

What that miserable girl said in her hearing, and her expression as she repeated it,

comes back to me again and again, and, somehow, I feel as if old Judson were getting revenge upon me. First James—and now Helen! But James believed it, while Helen, splendid girl that she is, knew at once that it was untrue. At least, I think so.

What an ugly word "thief" is! And how ugly it sounds from the lips of my child—even when there is no real justification for it! I know that all who come in contact with me, whether socially or in business, envy and hate me. It seems to me now that I know the thought in their spiteful brains—know the word that trembles on their lips but dares not come out.

Yesterday I turned upon my wife when we were alone for a moment. I have felt that she has been gloating over me ever since that afternoon.

"Well," I said, angrily—for I have been

extremely irritable through sleeplessness of late, "why don't you say it, instead of keeping this cowardly silence? Why don't you taunt me?"

She showed what she'd been thinking by understanding me instantly. "Taunt you!" she said; "I'm trying to forget it—I've been trying to forget it all these years. That's why I'm an old woman long before my time."

Her look was a very good imitation of tragedy. I felt unable to answer her and so begin a quarrel that might have relieved my mind. The best I was able to do was to say, sarcastically: "So that's the reason, is it? I had noted the fact, but was attributing it to your anxiety about falsifying your accounts."

I hurried away before she had a chance to reply.

V

A curious kind of cowardice has been growing on me of late. Whenever I feel the slightest pain or ache—a twinge I'd not have given a second thought to a year or so ago —I send post-haste for my doctor, the ridiculous, lying, flattering Hanbury. My intelligence forbids me to put the least confidence in him. I know he'd no more tell me or any other rich man a disagreeable truth than he'd tell one of his rich old women that she was past the age of pleasing men. Yet I send for Hanbury; and I swallow his lies about my health, and urge him on to feed me lies about my youthful appearance that are even more absurd. I'm thinking of employing him exclusively and keeping him by me—

for companionship. Cress is worse than worthless except for business, Jack is getting stale and repetitive with age, and I badly need some one to amuse me, to take my mind off myself and my affairs and my family.

At this moment I happen to be in my mood for mocking my fears and follies about the end. The End!—I'm not afraid of what comes after. All the horror I'm capable of feeling goes into the thought of giving up my crown and my sceptre, my millions and my dominion over men and affairs. The afterward? I've never had either the time or the mind for the speculative and the intangible—at least not since I passed the sentimental period of youth.

Each day my power grows—and my love of power and my impatience of opposition. It seems to me sacrilege for any one to dare oppose me when I have so completely vindi-

cated my right to lead and to rule. I understand those tyrants of history who used to be abhorrent to me—much could be said in defence of them. Once the power I now wield would have seemed tremendous. And it is tremendous. But I am so often galled by its limitations, more often still by the absurd obstacles that delay and fret me.

Early last month I found that down at Washington they were about to pass a law "regulating" railway rates, which means, of course, lowering them and cutting my dividends and disarranging my plans in general. I telephoned Senator ——, whom we keep down there to see that that sort of demagoguery is held in check, to come to me in New York at once. He appeared at my house the same evening, full of excuses and apologies. "The public clamour is so great," said he, "and the arguments of the opposition are

so plausible, that we simply have to do something. This bill is the least possible."

I rarely argue with understrappers. I merely told him to go to my lawyer's house, get the bill I had ordered drawn, take it back to Washington on the midnight train, and put it through. "You old women down there," said I, "seem incapable of learning that the mob isn't appeased, but is made hungrier, by getting what it wants. Humbug's the only dish for it. Fill it full of humbug and it gets indigestion and wishes it had never asked for anything."

My substitute was apparently more drastic than the other bill, but I had ordered into it a clause that would send it into the courts where we could keep it shuffling back and forth for years. To throw the demagogues off the scent, Senator —— had it introduced by one of the leaders of the opposition—as clever a

dealer in humbug as ever took command of a mob in order to set it brawling with itself at the critical moment. Our fellows pretended to yield with great reluctance to this "sweeping and dangerous measure," and it went through both houses with a whirl.

The President was about to sign it when up started that scoundrel ——, who owes his fortune to me and who got his place on the recommendation of several of us who thought him a safe, loyal, honourable man. The rascal pointed out the saving clause in my bill and made such a stir in the newspapers that our scheme was apparently ruined.

I quietly took a regular express for Washington, keeping close to my drawing-room. By roundabout orders from me a telegram had been sent to a signal tower in the outskirts of Washington, and it halted the train. In the darkness I slipped away, hailed a cab, and

drove to ——'s house. He was taken completely by surprise—I suppose he thought I'd be afraid to come near him, or to try to reach him in any way with those nosing newspapers watching every move. The only excuse he could make for himself was a whine about "conscience."

"I am taking the retaining fee of the people," said he; "I must serve their interests just as I served you when I took your retainers." This was his plea at the end of a two hours' talk in which I had exhausted argument and inducement. I felt that gentleness and diplomacy were in vain. I released my temper —temper with me is not waste steam, but powder to be saved until it can be exploded to some purpose.

"We put you in office, sir," I replied, "and we will put you out. You owe your honours to us, not to this mob you're pandering to now

in the hope of getting something or other. We'll punish you for your treachery if you persist in it. We'll drop you back into obscurity, and you'll see how soon your 'people' will forget you."

He paled and quivered under the lash. "If the people were not so sane and patient," said he, "they'd act like another Samson. They'd pull the palace down upon themselves for the pleasure of seeing you banqueting Philistines get your deserts."

"Don't inflict a stump speech on me," said I, going to the door—it just occurred to me that he might publicly eject me from his house and so make himself too strong to be dislodged immediately. "Within six months you'll be out of office—unless you come to your senses."

So I left him. A greater fool I never knew. I can understand the out-in-the-cold fellow

snapping his fangs; but for the life of me I can't understand a man with even a job as waiter or crumb-scraper at the banquet doing anything to get himself into trouble. He proved not merely a fool, but a weak fool as well; for, after a few days of thinking it over, he switched round, withdrew his objection, and explained it away—and so my bill was signed. But we are done with him. A man may be completely cured of an attack of insanity, but who would ever give him a position of trust afterward? Not I, for one. Too many men who have never gone crazy are waiting, eager to serve us.

Still, looking back over the incident, I am not satisfied with myself. I won, but I played badly. I must be careful—I am becoming too arrogant. If he had been a little stronger and cleverer, he would have had me thrown out of his house, and I don't care to think what a

position that would have put me in, not only then, but also for the future. As long as I was engaged in hand-to-hand battle and had personally to take what I got, it was well to have an outward bearing that frightened the timid and made the easy-going anxious to conciliate me. But, now that I employ others to retrieve the game I bring down, it is wiser that I show courtesy and consideration. I get better service; I cause less criticism. Enemies are indispensable to a rising man—they put him on his mettle and make people look on him as important. But to a risen man they are either valueless or a hindrance, and, at critical moments, a danger.

It is one of the large ironies of life that when one has with infinite effort gained power, one dares not indulge in the great pleasure of openly exercising it, for fear of losing it. Not even I can eat my cake and have it.

Sometimes success seems to me to mean rising to a height where one can more clearly see the things one cannot have.

And now luck, plus strong rowing and right steering, swept me on to another success —this time a brilliant marriage. The element of luck was particularly large in this instance, as in any matter where one of the factors is feminine. Every wise planner reduces the human element in his projects to the minimum, because human nature is as uncertain as chance itself. But while one can always rely, to a certain extent, upon the human element where it is masculine, where it is feminine there's absolutely no more foundation than in a quicksand. The women not only unsettle the men, but they also unsettle themselves; and, acting always upon impulse, they are as likely as not to fly straight in the face of what is best for them. Women are incapable of co-

operation. The only business they understand or take a genuine interest in is the capture of men—a business which each woman must pursue independently and alone.

Fortunately, Aurora, like most of the young women of our upper class, had been thoroughly trained in correct ideas of self-interest.

She was born in the purple. When she came into the world I had been a millionaire several years, and my wife and I had changed our point of view on life from that of the lower middle class in which we were bred (though we didn't know it at the time, and thought ourselves "as good as anybody"), to that of the upper class, to which my genius forced our admission. Aurora was our first child to have a French nurse, the first to have teachers at home—a French governess and a German one.

James had gone to the public school and then to Phillips Exeter; Walter had gone to public school a little while, and then to ——, where he was prepared for Harvard, not in a mixed and somewhat motley crowd, as James was, but in a company made up exclusively of youths of his own class, the sons of those who are aristocratic by birth or by achievement. Aurora was even more exclusively educated. She—with difficulty, as we were still new to our position—was got into a small class of aristocratic children that met at the house of the parents of two of them. Each day she went there in one of our carriages with her French nursery governess, promoted to be her companion; and, when the class was over for the day, the companion called for her in the carriage and took her home.

All Aurora's young friends were girls like herself, bred in the strictest ideas of the re-

sponsibilities of their station, and intent upon making a social success, and, of course, a successful marriage. At the time, my wife, who had not then been completely turned by the adulation my wealth had brought her, used to express to me her doubts whether these children were not too sordid. I was half inclined to agree with her, for it isn't pleasant to hear mere babies talk of nothing but dresses and jewels, palaces and liveries and carriages, good "catches," and social position. But I see now that there is no choice between that sort of education and sheer sentimentalism. It is far better that children who are to inherit millions and the responsibilities of high station should be over-sordid than over-sentimental. Sordidness will never lead them into the ruinous mischief of prodigality and bad marriages; sentimentalism is almost certain to do so.

My wife was extremely careful, as the mothers of our class must be, to scan the young men who were permitted to talk with Aurora. Only the eligible had the opportunity to get well acquainted with her—indeed, I believe Horton Kirkby was the first man she really knew well.

It was a surprise to me when Kirkby began to show a preference for her. His mother is one of the leaders of that inner circle of fashionable society which still barred the doors haughtily against us, though it admitted many who were glad to be our friends—perhaps I should say *my* friends. Kirkby himself keenly delighted in the power which his combination of vast wealth, old family, and impregnable social position gave him. Every one supposed he would marry in his own set. But Aurora got a chance at him, and—well, Aurora inherits something of my magnetism and luck.

Kirkby's coldness to me at the outset and his mother's deliberately snubbing us again and again make me think his intentions were not then serious. But Aurora alternately fired and froze him with such skill that she succeeded in raising in his mind a doubt which had probably never entered it before—a doubt of his ability to marry any woman he might choose. So, she triumphed.

But after they were engaged she continued to play fast and loose with him. At first I thought this was only clever manœuvring on her part to keep him uncertain and interested. But I presently began to be uneasy and sent her mother to question her adroitly. "She says," my wife reported to me, "that she can't take him and she can't give him up. She says there's one thing she'd object to more than to marrying him, and that is to seeing some other girl marry him."

"What nonsense!" said I; "I thought she was too well brought up for such folly."

"You must admit Kirkby is—clammy," replied my wife, always full of excuses for her children.

Before I could move to bring Aurora to her senses, Kirkby did it—by breaking off the engagement and transferring his attentions to Mary Stuyvesant, poor as poverty but beautiful and well born. Within a week Aurora had him back; within a fortnight she had the cards out for the wedding.

The presents began to pour in; two rooms down-stairs were filling with magnificence, and we had sent several van loads to the safety deposit vaults. There must have been close upon half a million dollars' worth, including my gift of a forty-thousand-dollar tiara. Every one in the house was agitated. I had given my wife and daughter *carte blanche,* releasing

Cress and Jack Ridley from attendance on me to assist them and to see that extravagance did not spread into absolutely wanton waste. But this does not mean that I was not in hearty sympathy with my wife's efforts to make the full realisation of our social ambition a memorable occasion. On the contrary, I wanted precisely that; and I knew the way to accomplish it was by getting five cents' worth for every five cents spent, not by imitating the wastefulness of the ignorant poor. I was willing that the dollars should fly; but I was determined that each one should hit the mark.

Jack Ridley said to me once: "Why, to you five hundred dollars is less than one dollar would be to me."

"Not at all," I replied; "we cling to five cents more tightly than you would to five dollars. We know the value of money because

we have it; you don't know because you haven't."

But the happiest, most interested person in all the household was my daughter Helen. She was to be maid of honour, and on the wedding day was to make her first appearance in a long dress. It seemed to me that she suddenly flashed out into wonderful beauty—a strange kind of beauty, all in shades of golden brown and having an air of mystery that moved even me to note and admire and be proud—and a little uneasy. Obviously she would be able to make a magnificent marriage, if she could be controlled. The greater the prize, the greater the anxiety until it is grasped.

When she tried on that first long dress of hers she came in to show herself off to me. She has never been in the least afraid of me —there is a fine, utter courage looking from

her eyes—an assurance that she could not be afraid of any one or anything.

She turned round slowly, that I might get the full effect. "Well, well!" said I, put into a tolerant mood by my pride in her. "Aurora had better keep you out of Horton's sight until after the ceremony."

She tossed her head. "He'd be safe from me if there wasn't another man in the world," she answered.

I frowned on this. "You'll have a hard time making as good a marriage as your sister, miss," said I. "You'll see, when we begin to look for a husband for you."

"I shall look for my own husband, thank you," she replied, pertly.

But her smile was so bright that I only said, "We'll cross that bridge, miss, when we come to it—we'll cross it together."

There was an unpleasant silence—her ex-

pression made me feel more strongly than ever before that she would be troublesome. I said: "How old are you now?"

"Why, don't you remember? I was sixteen last Wednesday. You gave me *this.*" She touched a pearl brooch at her neck.

No, I didn't remember—Ridley attends to all those little matters for me. But I said, "To be sure," and patted her on the shoulder —and let her kiss me, and then sent her away. For a moment I envied the men whose humble station enables them to enjoy more of such intercourse as that. I confess I have my moments when all this striving and struggling after money and power seems miserably unsatisfactory, and I picture myself and my fellow strugglers as so many lunatics in a world full of sane people whom we toil for and give a bad quarter of an hour now and then as our lunacy becomes violent.

But that is a passing mood.

The next I heard of Helen she had set the whole house in an uproar. Two days before the wedding she shut herself in her apartment and sent out word by her maid that she would not be maid of honour—would not attend the wedding. "I can do nothing with her," said my wife; "she's been beyond my control for two years."

"I'll go to her," I said. "We'll see who's master in this house."

She herself opened her sitting-room door for me. She had a book in her hand and was apparently calm and well prepared. The look in her eyes made me think of what my wife had once said to me: "Be careful how you try to bully her, James. She's like you—and Jim."

"What's this I hear about you refusing to appear in your first long dress?" I asked—a

very different remark, I'll admit, from the one I intended to open with.

She smiled faintly, but did not take her serious eyes from mine. "I can't go to the wedding," said she. "Please, father, don't ask it! I—I hoped they wouldn't tell you. I told them they might say I was ill."

I managed to look away from her and collect my thoughts. "You are the youngest," I began, "and we have been foolishly weak with you. But the time has come to bring you under control and save you from your own folly. Understand me! You will go to the wedding, and you will go as maid of honour." I was master of myself again and I spoke the last words sternly, and was in the humour for a struggle. She had roused one of my strongest passions—the passion for breaking wills that oppose mine.

There was a long pause, and then she said,

quietly: "Very well, father. I shall obey you."

I was like a man who has flung himself with all his might against what he thinks is a powerful obstacle and finds himself sprawling ridiculously upon vacancy. I lost my temper. "What do you mean," I exclaimed, angrily, "by making all this fuss about nothing? You will go at once and apologise to your mother and sister."

She sat silent, her eyes down.

"Do you hear?" I demanded.

She fixed her gaze steadily on mine. "Yes, sir," she answered, "but I cannot obey."

"How dare you say that to me?" I said, so furious that I was calm. I had a sense of impotence—as if the irresistible force had struck the immovable body.

"Because what you ask isn't right."

"You forget that I am your father."

"And you forget that I am"—she drew herself up proudly and looked at me unafraid—"your daughter."

There seems to be some sort of magic in her. I can't understand it myself, but her answer completely changed my feeling toward her. It had never before occurred to me that the fact of her being my daughter gave her rights and privileges which would be intolerable in another. I saw family pride for the first time and instantly respected it. "If I only had a son like you!" I said, on impulse, for the moment forgetting everything else in this new conception of family-line and its meaning.

The tears rushed to her eyes. She leaned forward in her eagerness. "You *had*—you *have*," she said. "Oh, father——"

"Not another word," I said, sternly; "why did you refuse to go to Aurora's wedding?"

"Tuesday night she came into my room and

got into my bed. She put her arms round me and said, 'Helen, I *can't* marry him! He's—he's just *awful!* It makes me cold all over for him to touch me.' We talked nearly all night —and—I feel sorry for her—but I felt it would be wrong for me to go to the wedding or have anything to do with it. She wouldn't break it off—she said she'd go on if it killed her. And I begged her to go to you and ask you to stop it, but she said she wanted to marry him or she wouldn't. And—but when you said I must go, it seemed to me it'd be wrong to disobey. Only—I can't apologise to them —I can't—because—I've done nothing to apologise for."

"Never mind, child," I said—I felt thoroughly uncomfortable. It is impossible clearly to explain many matters to an innocent mind. "You need not apologise. But pay no attention to Aurora's hysterics—and enjoy

yourself at the wedding. Girls always act absurdly when they're about to marry. Six months from now she'll be the happiest woman in New York, and if she didn't marry him she'd be the most wretched."

"Poor Aurora!" said Helen, with a long sigh.

But Helen could not have said "poor" Aurora on the great day at St. Bartholomew's. It was, indeed, an hour of triumph for us all. As she and Kirkby came down from the altar, I glanced round the church and had one of my moments of happiness. There they all were —all the pride and fashion and established wealth of New York—all of them at my feet. I, who had sprung from nothing; I, who had had to fight, fight, fight, staking everything—yes, character, even liberty itself—here was I, enthroned, equal to the highest, able to put my heel upon the necks of those who had regarded

me as part of the dirt under their feet. I went down the aisle of the church, drunk with pride and joy. I had not had such happiness since that day when, smarting under Judson's insults, I suddenly remembered that, if he had honour, I had the million and was a millionaire. As my wife and I drove back to the house for the reception, I caught myself muttering to the crowds pushing indifferently along the sidewalks, intent upon their foolish little business, "Bow! Bow! Don't you know that one of your masters is passing?"

Just as I was in the full swing of this ecstasy I happened to notice a huge stain on the costly cream-coloured lining of the brougham —I was in my wife's carriage. "What's that?" said I, pointing to it.

She told a silly story of how she had carelessly broken a bottle in the carriage a few

days before and had ruined a seven-hundred-dollar dress and the carriage-lining.

Instantly the routine of my life claimed me —my happiness was over. I made the natural comment upon such criminal indifference to the cost of things; she retorted after her irrational, irresponsible fashion. We were soon quarrelling fiercely upon the all-important subject, money, which she persists in denouncing as vulgar. We could scarcely compose our faces to leave the carriage and make a proper appearance before the crowds without the house and the throngs within. As for me, my day was ruined.

But the reception was, in fact, a failure, though it seemed a success. Aurora, the excitement of the ceremony over, was looking wretched; and, as she came down to go away, her face was tragical. I could feel the hypocritical whisperings of my guests. Exasper-

ated, I turned, only to stumble on Helen, crying as if her heart were breaking. My new son-in-law bade me good-bye with a cold, condescending shake of the hand, and in a voice that made me long to strike him. It set me to gnawing again on what Helen heard at the dancing class three years ago. When everyone had gone my wife came to me, her eyes sparkling with anger.

"Did you see old Mrs. Kirkby leave?" she asked.

"No—she must have gone without speaking to me," I replied.

"She left less than a minute after Aurora and Horton. When I put out my hand to her she just touched it with the tips of her fingers, and all she said was, 'I hope we'll run across each other at my son's, some time.' "

"They'll change their tune when I get after them!" I exclaimed.

"What can *you* do?" sneered my wife. "They know your money goes to Walter. Besides, it's all your fault."

"*My* fault?" I said, in disgust—everything is always my fault, according to my wife.

"Yes—it's your reputation," she retorted, bitterly. "It'll take two generations of respectability to live it down."

I left the room abruptly. The injustice of this was so hideous that reply was impossible. After all my sacrifices, after all my stupendous achievements, after lifting my family from obscurity to the highest dignity—*this* was my reward! Yes, the highest dignity. I know how they sneer. I know how they whisper the ugly word that Helen heard at the dancing class. I see it in their eyes when I take them unawares. But—they cringe before me, they fear me, and they dare not offend me. What more could I ask? What

do I care about their cowardly mutterings which they dare not let me hear?

In the upper hall I came upon Helen, sitting in the alcove, sobbing. "Poor Aurora! Poor Aurora!" she said, when I paused before her.

"Poor Aurora!" I retorted, angrily. "Your sister is married to one of the richest men in New York."

"He tried to kiss me as they were leaving," she went on, between sobs, "and I drew away and slapped him. When Aurora hugged me she whispered, 'I don't blame you—I detest him!' Poor Aurora!"

I went into my apartment and slammed the door. I knew how it would turn out, and this hysterical nonsense infuriated me.

When Aurora and Kirkby came back from their trip through the South and burst in on us at lunch [it was a Sunday], probably I was

"I came upon Helen, sitting in the alcove, sobbing."

the only one at the table who wasn't surprised by their looks. Helen, I knew, had been expecting Aurora would return with a face like the last scene of the last act of a tragedy. Instead she was radiant, beautifully dressed, and with an assurance of manner that was immensely becoming to her—the assurance of a woman who is conscious of having married brilliantly and is determined to enjoy her good fortune to the uttermost. It was plain that she was on the best possible terms with Kirkby. As for him, he looked foolishly happy and was obviously completely under her control, as I knew he would be. He is certainly in himself not a dignified figure—short and fat and sallow and amazingly ordinary-looking for a man of such birth and breeding. But the instant people hear who he is, they forget his face, figure, and mind. In this world, what things really are is not important; it's altogether

what they seem to be, altogether the valuation agreed upon. I've sometimes watched the children at their games, "playing" that pins and rags have fantastic big values; and I've thought how ridiculous it was to smile at them and keep serious faces over our own grown-up game of precisely the same kind.

Aurora had been sending home the newspapers of every town in which they had stopped, so we had a pretty good idea of the ovation they had received. But as soon as she was alone with us she went over it all—and we were as proud as was she. "I don't think Horton liked it particularly, but there wasn't a place where they didn't know more about me than about him," said she. "You noticed, didn't you, that the papers often said, 'James Galloway's daughter and her husband'? Horton was awfully funny about the excitement over us. At first he kept up the pretence with

me that he thought it vulgar. But he soon cut that out and fairly devoured the newspapers. Of course we didn't drop our exclusiveness before people—everywhere they talked about how anxious we were to avoid notoriety. Whenever the reporters came near us, my! but didn't Horton sit on them."

She made only one criticism of him—and that a laughing one. "You thought," said she, "that we started in a private car. Well, we didn't. When I got to Jersey City he put me into a stuffy old regular Pullman with all sorts of people. And he said, with the grandest air, 'I took the drawing-room, as I thought you'd like privacy.' I saw that it was my time to assert myself." She laughed. "We had a little talk," she went on, "and at Philadelphia he rushed round and got a private car."

She soon brought his mother to terms. Mrs. Kirkby called on my wife three days after they

got back, and took her driving the following afternoon. That drive is one of the important events in my career. It marks the completion of my conquest of New York. Thinking it over, I decided to double Aurora's portion under my will. Next to Judson, she has been the most useful person to me—no, not next to Judson, but without exception. I should have got my million-dollar start somehow, if I had never seen him; but I should have had some difficulty in reaching my climax if I had not had Aurora.

My flood-tide of luck held through one more event—the settlement with Natalie.

Naturally, I had put a good deal of thought upon this problem. The longer I considered it the more clearly I realised that to give her anything at all would be an act of sheer generosity, perhaps of dangerous generosity. As I have said before, it did not take me long to

absolve myself from the impossible letter of my promise. If I had been capable of keeping a promise to give six million dollars—the sum necessary to produce "*an* income of a quarter of a million"—to a person whom it was absolutely vital to have financially dependent upon me, I should have accomplished very little in the world. At first my decision to keep the spirit of my promise by giving "*the* income of a quarter of a million" seemed as fair as it was liberal. But now that she was safely married to my son, I began to see that to give her anything would be to strike a blow at his domestic happiness, and that would mean striking a blow at her own happiness. It could not fail to unsettle her mind to find herself with an independent income of ten or twelve thousand a year in addition to the five or six thousand she already had. Nothing else is so certain to destroy a husband's influence

or to unfit a wife contentedly to fill her proper place in the family as for her to be financially independent.

I have never been lacking in the courage to do right, no matter what moral quibble or personal unpleasantness has stood in the way. I resolved not to give her anything outright, but, instead, to provide for her in my will—the income of a quarter of a million, to be hers for life, unless Walter should die and she marry again.

There now remained only the comparatively simple matter of reconciling her to this arrangement when she was expecting at once to receive the equivalent of six millions, free from conditions.

A weak man would have put off the issue until the last moment, through dislike of disagreeable scenes. But I am not one of those who aggravate difficulties by postponing them.

The day after Walter and Natalie sailed from the other side for the homeward journey, I sent for her father. "Matt," said I, "as you probably remember, I made up my mind to do something for your daughter as soon as she decided to become my daughter, too. I finally got round to it this morning. I thought I'd tell you I had made the necessary changes in my will."

He looked at me narrowly, with an expression between wonder and suspicion. "I don't understand," said he.

"I promised your daughter she should have the income of a quarter of a million," I replied, "and this morning I put the necessary provision into my will."

His mouth dropped open. He wiped his forehead with his handkerchief several times. Then all of a sudden he flushed a violent red and struck the table with his fist. "Why,

damn it, Galloway," he exclaimed, "you promised her you'd settle *an* income of a quarter of a million on her at once."

I looked at him as if I thought him crazy. "Where did you get that notion?" said I. "I never heard of anything so preposterous. Did you think I'd gone stark mad?" I let him see that I was getting angry.

"She told me so—told me within an hour of your promising it," he replied. "And, by heavens, you'll stick to your promise!" He banged the table with his fist again.

As I had made clear my intention—which was my only purpose for that first interview—I rose. "I permit no man to talk to me in that fashion," said I; "not even an old friend who has apparently gone out of his mind. I do not care to discuss the matter further."

I went into my inner office and shut him out. I knew he was too practical a man ever

really to have believed that I intended to give his daughter any such stupendous sum. I was certain he had pretended to her that he believed it, because he was as eager for her to marry Walter as I was. Assuming that he did believe it, he could not but see there was nothing but disaster for him in offending me. Therefore, I had not the slightest fear that he would persist in his anger; I knew he would calm down, would at most cook up some scheme for trying to frighten some sort of a settlement out of me, and would break the news to his daughter at the first opportunity, so that he might caution her against doing anything foolish on impulse.

I heard nothing from him and did not see him again until we all went down to the dock to meet Walter and Natalie. The exchange of greetings between the two families was far from cordial, her father and I barely nod-

ding at each other. Natalie and her mother and Walter went up-town together. I saw that her mother could hardly wait to get her alone so that she could tell her and coach her.

I did not permit her to see me in circumstances in which she could have talked freely until nearly two weeks had passed. Then, her friendly manner was rather strained, but she said nothing about her settlement—and, of course, I'm not the one to poke a sleeping dog. I was delighted to find such a striking confirmation of my good opinion of her. Doubtless she doesn't feel especially kindly toward me, but she has given no sign—and that is the important fact. A less intelligent woman would not have seen how useless it was to make a fight, or would have given way to her temper just for the pleasure of relieving her feelings.

To these two triumphs was now added a third, which, in its many-sidedness, gave me more satisfaction than either of the others.

It came in the course of my campaign to push out of my industrial combination the minor elements that had to be conciliated when I was forming it. These were the little fellows who were the chief original owners of the various concerns of which it was composed. They were no longer of the slightest use to the industry; they were simply clinging to it, mere parasites fattening upon my brains. I felt that the time had come for shaking them off, and forcing them to give up their holdings. I needed every share either for my own investment purposes or to bind to me the men I had put in direct charge.

Having always had the shaking off of the parasites in mind, I had never let the combination develop its full earning capacity. As my

first move toward complete possession, I caused it to be given out that I was privately much disappointed with the outlook for the industry and for the combination, and was thinking of disposing of my holdings quietly. When this rumour that I was about to "unload" was brought to my attention, I refused either to confirm or to deny it. I followed this with some slight manipulations of rates, prices, and the stock market. I was, of course, careful to do nothing violent. I never forget, nowadays, that I am one of the bulwarks of conservatism and stability; I and my fellow-occupants of the field of high finance sternly repress all the stock-raiding moves of the little fellows who are struggling to get together in a hurry the millions that would enable them to break into our company.

My moves against my combination sent its stock slowly down. The minority stockhold-

ers unloaded—the most timid upon the least timid; then, as fear spread and infected the most hopeful among them, all unloaded upon the public. Finally, I gave the stock a hard blow that sent it tumbling—almost openly I sold ten thousand shares, and the sale was regarded by the public as ominously significant, because it was known that I no longer speculated, and that I frowned upon speculation and speculators. When I had gathered in what I wanted, at bottom prices, I came to the rescue, put up the price with a strong hand, denounced those who had attacked it, expressed my great faith in the future of the industry and of my combination—and caught in the net, along with a lot of *bona fide* sellers, a vast shoal of wriggling and gasping speculators in "shorts."

The one of these fish that peculiarly interested me was—my son Walter. I knew he

would be there, and had known it since the third week of my campaign. As I have never permitted him to see into the machinery of my financial plant, he fancied that he could operate without my finding it out. But one of my spies had brought the news to my chief brokers when he placed his second selling order. I was astonished that another son of mine had gone into such low and stupid and even dishonourable business—yes, dishonourable. My own speculative operations were never of the petty character and for the petty purposes that constitute gambling. I sent at once for a transcript of his bank account—a man in my position must have at his command every possible source of inside information and I have made getting at bank accounts one of my specialties. My astonishment became amazement when I learned that four cash items in that account, making in the total nearly the whole of his

gambling capital, were four checks for fifty thousand dollars each—from his mother!

I had tried many times to get hold of her bank account; but she, partly through craft, partly through the perversity of luck, did business with one of the banks into whose secrets I had never been able to penetrate. I understand at a glance where the two hundred thousand had come from. They were her "commissions" got from me by stealth, by juggling household and personal accounts. I saw that I had the opportunity to give Walter a vivid lesson, to get back my money, and to reduce my wife once more to a proper complete dependence. So I talked business with Walter a great deal during those three months, taking always a gloomy view of prospects of my combination. From time to time through my spies I learned that he was eagerly taking advantage of these "tips," was plunging deeper

and deeper in his betting that the stock of my industrial would continue to fall. When I suddenly put up the price of the stock, he was on the wrong side of the market to the extent of all his cash, and, like scores of other fools, far beyond.

I went home to lunch on the day I hauled in my net, for I wished to be where I could brand the lesson indelibly upon my wife. I had ordered my men to give out my strong statement and to rocket the market not earlier than a quarter past one and not later than half past—our lunch hour. We had been at table about ten minutes when my wife was called away to the telephone. She was in high good-humour as she left the room; indeed, for nearly two months her confident hopes of profits that would give her a million or more in her own right had made her almost youthful in looks and in spirits. She was gone a long

time, so long that I was just sending for her when she entered. The change in her was shocking. For a moment I was alarmed lest my lesson had been too severe.

Helen started up, upsetting her chair in her fright at her mother's grey old face. "Mother!" she exclaimed, "what is it?"

Her mother tried to smile, but gave me a frightened, cowed glance. "I—I—I'm not well all of a sudden," she said. Then she abruptly left the room, Helen following her.

As I and Ridley and Cress were smoking our after-lunch cigars, she sent for me. I found her alone in her darkened sitting-room, lying on the lounge. She asked me to sit, and then she began: "I wish to speak to you about —about Walter."

"About his gambling?" said I.

She did not move or speak for fully a minute. It was so dark in her corner that I could

not see her distinctly; besides, when I spoke, she had quickly covered her face. At length she said: "So you knew all the time? You set this trap for——"

"Both of you," I said, as I saw that she did not intend to complete her sentence.

Presently she went on: "Then I needn't explain. What I want to say is—it's all my fault that Walter did it. He's down at your office now. He didn't have a chance to cover, the stock went up so fast. He's lost everything, and—but I suppose it's to you that he's in debt. I'm sick—sick in body, and sick in mind. I give up. I've made my last fight. All I ask is—don't punish him for what's all my fault."

"Your fault?" said I, my curiosity roused.

"I wished to be free," she replied. "I wished them to be free. I tried through James when I saw how certain it was he could

never get on with you. Then I tried through Walter when I saw how you were crushing him and Natalie."

"So you set James to gambling?"

"Yes—and I'd have confessed, but there were the other children just at the age when they most needed me to protect them from you. And — I — I — couldn't. Besides, he begged me not to—and there was his forgery. I never thought he had it in him to do that."

"But he was *your* son," said I, "and he had *your* example. He knew how you got the money you gave him——"

"Oh, don't! don't — please don't!" she wailed, breaking down altogether. "If you could see yourself as others, as my children and I see you, you'd understand—No! No! I don't mean that. Forgive me—and don't punish Walter for my sins." She burst into

such a wild passion of sobs and tears that I rang for her maid, and, when she came, left to go down-town.

In my office sat Walter, looking dejected, but far from the sorry figure I had expected to see. He followed me into my inside room and stood near my desk, his eyes down.

"Well, sir!" said I, sternly. In fact, I was not the least bit angry; my complete victory, and the recovery of my control over my family had put me in a serene frame of mind. "Your mother has told me everything," I added, not wishing him to irritate me with any lies.

"But she doesn't know everything," said he, "I risked half of Natalie's money—and—I—her father loaned me two hundred thousand."

I frowned still more heavily to conceal the

satisfaction this news gave me. "Did Bradish know what you were going to do with the money?" I demanded.

"Yes," replied Walter, in a voice that must have come out of a desert-dry throat. "He—he went twenty thousand shares short on his own account."

This was better and better. For the first time in years I felt like laughing aloud. "You didn't by any chance draw Kirkby in?" I asked, with a pretence of sarcasm.

Walter shook his head. "No—Kirkby doesn't care about stocks."

That gave me a chance to laugh. But it wasn't a kind of laughter that Walter found contagious. If anything, he got a few shades whiter. "I've known you were in this for two months and a half," said I. "I wished to give you an object-lesson that would make you appreciate why Kirkby doesn't care about stocks.

I've known every move you made—we who rule down here always know about the small people, about the idiots like you. We are rarely able to fool each other; what chance have you and your kind got? I told you all this, and now I've taught it to you. I've not decided on your punishment yet. But one thing I can tell you: if you ever go into the market again, you will — join your ex-brother!"

He was silent for a moment, then began: "Mother——"

"I know about her," I interrupted. "I wish to hear nothing from you."

He straightened himself and looked at me for the first time. "She telephoned me she was going to take all the blame," he said, resolutely. "It isn't true that she led me into this. I started with my own money, then added Natalie's, then some from Mr. Bradish, and it

wasn't until then that I went to mother and induced her to risk her money."

I was astonished at the manliness of his look and tone—as unlike him as possible. "Marriage seems to have improved you," said I.

"Yes—it's Natalie," he replied, his face taking on the foolish look a man gets when he is under the thumb of some woman. "She's very different from what we thought—or from what she thought herself. She's made me into a new sort of man."

"A stock gambler?" said I.

He reddened, but knew better than to show his teeth at me, when he was, if possible, more dependent than ever before.

"A fine story you tell for your mother," I went on; "but she told me everything—about James, too."

"If she says she led James into speculating, that wasn't so, either," he replied, and again

his voice was honest. "Jim was deep in the hole, and she tried to help him out."

"And how do you happen to know so much about James and his speculating?" I asked, sharply.

His eyes dropped and he began to shift from leg to leg in his old despicable fashion. "I—know," he said, doggedly.

But I wasn't interested in James—or, for that matter, in the comparative guilt of Walter and his mother. I had no more time to give to the affair. I sent Walter away, after repeating my warning as to the consequences of another lapse, and then I gave my whole attention to business—to punishing the other wretched "shorts" and to putting on full steam throughout my combination, mine now in its entirety and therefore ready for the utmost development of its earning power.

Six months later—that is, last week—I

doubled the outstanding capital stock and at the same time increased the dividend from five per cent. to six. It is now earning forty-two per cent. on my total actual investment—a satisfactory property, quite up to my expectations.

My wife has gone abroad with Helen. Poor woman! She has never been the same since her dream collapsed. However, she no longer irritates or opposes me. And Natalie is the most satisfactory of daughters-in-law, and Walter the most docile of sons. As for Aurora, I have been unexpectedly able to get a hold upon her, and through her upon Kirkby. She rules him in every matter except one. He keeps her on short, absurdly short, supplies for the household and her personal expenses. "When I found that he carried a change purse, I had a foreboding," said she to me the other day. "And when I saw how

he looked as he opened it, took a nickel out and closed it, I knew what I had to look forward to." I have raised her hopes for a large allowance from me in the near future, and a fortune under my will. Presently, through my efforts, combined with hers, I think I shall have Kirkby for a colossal undertaking I am working out.

Altogether, my affairs are in a thoroughly satisfactory condition. If it weren't for old age, and certain pains at times in the back of my head—though they may be largely imaginary. Then there is the matter of sleep. I haven't had a night's sleep in seven years, and for the last year I have had only three hours', pieced out with a nap in my carriage on the way up-town.

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." But—it wears a crown!

VI

When I began to build my palace in New York City, in Fifth Avenue near Fifty-ninth Street, I intended it to be the seat of my family for many generations. My architect obeyed my orders and planned the most imposing residence in the city; but, before it was finished—indeed, before we had any considerable amount of furniture collected for it—no less than seven palaces were under way, each excelling mine in every respect—in extent, in costliness of site and structure, in taste, and in spaciousness of interior arrangement. This was mortifying, for it warned me that within a few years my palace would be completely, even absurdly, in eclipse, for it would stand among towering

flat-houses and hotels—a second-class neighbourhood.

But, irritating and expensive though the lesson was, it was of inestimable value to me with my ability to see and to profit. It taught me my own ignorance and so set me to educating myself in matters most important to the dignity of my family line. Also it taught me how I was underestimating New York and its expansive power, and therefore the expansive power of the whole country. I began to acquire large amounts of real estate which have already vindicated my judgment; and I made bolder and more sweeping moves in my industrial and railway developments—those moves that have frightened many of my associates. Naturally, to the short-sighted, the far-sighted seem visionary. A man may stake his soul, or even his life, on something beyond his vision, and therefore, to him, visionary;

but he won't stake enough of his money in it seriously to impair his fortune if he loses. That's why large success is only for the far-sighted.

While I was debating the palace problem, along came the craze for country establishments near New York—palaces set in the midst of parks. I was suspicious of this apparently serious movement among the people of my class, for I knew that at bottom we Americans of all classes are a show-off people—that is, are human. Only the city can furnish the crowd we want as a background for our prosperity and as spectators of it; we are not content with the gaping of a few undiscriminating, dull hayseeds. We like intelligent gaping—the kind that can come pretty near to putting the price-marks on houses, jewels, and dresses. We'd put them there ourselves, even the most "refined" of us, if

custom, made, by the way, by the poor people with their so-called culture, did not forbid it. So, though I was too good a judge of business matters to have much faith in the country-house movement, I bought "Ocean Farm" and planned my house there on a vast scale. It is, as a little study of it will reveal, ingeniously arranged, so that, if the country-seat fashion shall ever revive, it can be expanded without upsetting proportions, and splendid improvements can easily be made in the handsome, five-hundred-acre park which surrounds it.

But just as I was taking up the problem of an establishment for Walter, the shrewdness of my doubts about the country began to appear. I had been investing in real estate in and near upper Fifth Avenue; I determined to build myself a new palace there that would be monumental. It will never be possible for

a private establishment in New York to cover more surface than a block, so I fixed on and bought the entire block between —— and —— Streets and Fifth and Madison Avenues. Then I ordered my architect to drop everything else and spend a year abroad in careful study of the great houses of Europe, both old and new. This detailing of a distinguished architect for a year might seem to be an extravagance; in fact, it was one of those wise economies which are peculiarly characteristic of me.

Money spent upon getting the best possible in the best possible way is never extravagance. People incapable of thinking in large sums do not see that to lay out five millions economically one must adopt methods proportionately broader than those one would use in laying out five thousand or five hundred thousand to the best advantage. It has cost me hundreds

of thousands, perhaps millions, to learn that lesson.

I sent a man from my office along with my architect to act as an auditor for his expense accounts, and to see that he did his work conscientiously and did not use my money and my purchase of his time in junketing "*au grand prince.*" In addition to planning the palace, he was to settle upon interior decorations and to buy pictures, tapestries, carvings, furniture, etc., etc.—of course, making no important purchases without consulting me by cable. I believe he never did a harder year's work in his life—and I'm not easily convinced as to what I haven't seen with my own eyes.

When he came home and submitted the results of his tour, I myself took them abroad and went over them with the authorities on architecture and decoration in Paris. It was two years before the final plan was ready for

execution. In those two years I had learned much—so much that my palace near Fifty-ninth Street, which I had imagined the acme of art and splendour when I accepted its final plans, had become to me an intolerable flaunting of ignorance and tawdriness. I had intended still to retain it as the hereditary residence for the heirs-apparent of my line, and, when they should succeed to the headship of the family, the so-to-speak dowager-residence. But my education had made this impossible. I was impatient for the moment to arrive when I could sell it, or tear it down, and put in place of it a flat-house for people of moderate wealth, or a first-class hotel.

Three years and a half from the sailing of my architect in quest of ideas I took possession of the completed palace. First and last I had spent nearly five millions and a half upon it; I was well content with the result. Nor has

the envious chatter of alleged critics in this country disturbed me. There will be scores of houses as costly, and many as imposing, before fifty years have passed; but, until there is a revolution in the art of building, there will be none more dignified, more conspicuous, or more creditable. I flatter myself that, as money is spent, I got at least two dollars of value for every dollar I paid out. I wished to build for the centuries, and I am confident that I have accomplished my purpose. Only an earthquake or a rain of ruin from the sky or a flood of riot can overthrow my handiwork.

But to go back a little. Just as we were about to move, my wife and Ridley died within a few days of each other. At first these deaths were a severe shock to me, as, aside from the sad, yet after all inevitable, parting, there was the prospect of the complete disarrangement of my domestic plans, and at a highly incon-

venient moment. But, thanks to my unfailing luck, my fears proved groundless. Helen came splendidly to the rescue and displayed at once an executive ability that more than filled the gap. My plans for the change of residence, for the expansion of the establishment, and for my own comfort—everything went forward smoothly, far more smoothly than I had hoped when my wife and Ridley were alive and part of my calculation.

At first blush it may seem rather startling, but I missed poor old Ridley far more than I missed my wife. A moment's consideration, however, will show that this was neither strange nor unnatural. For twenty years he was my constant companion whenever I was not at work down-town. During those twenty years I had seen little of my wife except in the presence of others, usually some of them not members of my family. Whenever we were

alone, it was for the despatch of more or less disagreeable business. She had her staff of servants, I mine; she had her interests, I mine. Wherever our interests met, they clashed.

I think she was a thoroughly unhappy woman—as every woman must be who does not keep to the privacy and peace of the home. I looked at her after she had been dead a few hours, and was impressed by the unusualness of the tranquillity of her face. It vividly recalled her in the days when we lived in the little house in the side street away down-town and talked over our business and domestic affairs every night before going to sleep. After the first few years and until almost the end she was a great trial to me. But I have no resentment. Indeed, now that she is gone I feel inclined to concede that she was not so much to blame as are these absurd social con-

ditions that tempt women to yield to their natural folly and give them power to harass and hamper men.

I'm inclined to despair of marriage, at least so far as we of the upper and dominating, and example-setting, class are concerned. With us what basis of common interest is there left between husband and wife? He has his large business affairs which wholly absorb him, which do not interest her—indeed, which he would on no account permit her small, uninformed mind to meddle in. With all his energy and all his intelligence enlisted elsewhere, what time or interest has he for home and wife? And to her he seems dull, an infliction and a bore. Nor has she any interest at home —governesses, a housekeeper, an army of servants do her work for her. So far as I can see, except as a means whereby a woman may disport herself in mischief-breeding luxury

and laziness, marriage has no rational excuse for persisting.

It was with genuine regret that I was compelled to deny my wife's last request. I say "deny," but I was, of course, far too generous and considerate to torment her in her last moments. When she made up her mind that the doctors and nurses were deceiving her and that she wasn't to get well, she asked for me. When we were alone, she said: "James, I wish to see our son—I wish *you* to send for him."

I did not pretend to misunderstand her. I knew she meant James. As she was very feeble, and barely conscious, she was in no condition to decide for herself. It was a time for me to be gentle; but there is never a time for weakness. "Yes," I said, humouring her, "I will have him sent for."

"I wish *you* to send for him, James," she insisted; "send right away."

"Very well," said I, "I'll send for him." And I rose as if to obey.

"Don't go just yet," she went on; "there's something more."

I sat in silence so long that I began to think she was asleep or unconscious. But finally she spoke: "I got Walter's permission this morning. James, if I tell you of a great wrong he has done, a very great wrong, will you forgive him for my sake?"

I thought over her request. Finally I said, "Yes."

"Look at me," she went on. Our eyes met. "Say it again."

"Yes, I will forgive him," I said, and I meant it—unless the wrong should prove to be one of those acts for which forgiveness is impossible.

She turned her face away, then said, slowly, each word coming with an effort: "It wasn't

James who forged your name. It was Walter."

I felt enormously relieved, for, while I shouldn't have hesitated to break my promise had it been wise to do so, I am a man who holds his word sacred even to his own hurt, provided it is not also to the jeopardy of vital affairs. "I'm not surprised," said I. "It is like Walter to hide behind any one foolish enough to shield him."

"No—he's not that way any more," she pleaded, her passion for shielding her children from my justice as strong as ever. "He told me long ago—when you caught him in that speculation. And we talked it over and then we went to see James, and he insisted that we shouldn't tell you."

"Why?" I asked. "What reason did he give?"

"He said he had made his life and you yours,

and that he knew you didn't want to be disturbed any more than he did."

"He was right," said I.

The forgery has long ceased to be important. James and his wife, with their wholly different ideas and methods, could not possibly be remoulded now to my purposes. I have educated Walter and Natalie to the headship of the family; I've neither time nor inclination to take up a couple of strangers and make an arduous and extremely dubious experiment.

"So," my wife went on, "I ask you to send for James. I wish to see him restored to what is rightfully his before I die."

"I'll send for him," said I. "It may take a little time, as he is out of town. But be patient, and I'll send for him."

I learned that I had spoken more truthfully than I knew. He was camping with his wife

in the depths of the Adirondacks, several days away from the mails. The next day I told Cress to write him a letter saying I'd interpose no objection if he should try to see his mother, who was ill. I ordered Cress to hold the letter until the following day. But that night she died. She was not fully conscious again after her exhausting talk with me.

The evening of the day of the funeral I took Walter into my sitting-room and repeated to him what his mother had told me. "But," said I, "because I promised her, I forgive you. It would have been more manly had you confessed to me, but I've learned not to expect the impossible."

"All I ask, sir," said he, "is that you never let Natalie know. She'd despise me—she'd leave me."

I could not restrain a smile at this absurd exaggeration—at this delusion of vanity that

he was the important factor with Natalie, and not I and my property.

"You can say," he went on, "that you have changed your mind, and you needn't give a reason. And James can take my place, and, believe me, she'll not be at all surprised."

I had no difficulty in believing him, for Natalie's experience with her dowry had no doubt put her in the proper frame of mind for any further change of plan I might happen to make. I patted him on the shoulder. "I promised your mother I'd forgive you," said I, "and I'll fulfil my promise to the letter. James is best off where he is, and, if you continue to try to please, your prospects shall remain as they are."

He was overcome with gratitude and relief. But he was presently trying to look sorry. "I feel ashamed of myself," he said.

"You can afford to," I replied, drily. "It

will cost you nothing. But I venture to suggest that instead of pretending to quarrel with good fortune, you would better be planning to deserve it."

The two deaths—my wife's and Ridley's—coming so close together made a profoundly disagreeable impression upon me. My abhorrence of "the end," to which I have referred several times, then definitely became a monomania with me. The thought of "the end" began to thrust itself upon me daily—or, rather, nightly. I have never been a happy man. Added to my natural incessant restlessness, which always characterises a creative intellect, and which has kept me as well as every one around me in a state of irritation, there is in me an absolute incapacity to live in the present; and to be happy, I have long since seen, one must live in the present. Occasionally, when my fame or my power or my wealth

has been suddenly and vividly revealed to me in moments of triumph, I have lived in the present for a little while. But soon the future, its projects, its duties, its possibilities, have stretched me on the rack again. As for the much-talked-of happiness of anticipation, that is possible only to children and childish persons. When the battle is on—and when has the battle not been on with me?—the general is too busy to indulge in any anticipations of victory. He has hardly time even for anxieties about defeat.

I neglected to note, in its proper order, that my wife willed all her jewels—a value of eight hundred thousand dollars—to James. I consulted my lawyer and found that through carelessness, or, rather, through ignorance of the law, I had given her a legal title to them, a legal right to dispose of them by will. There was nothing for it but to make the best bar-

gain I could. After some roundabout negotiations James declined my proposal that he accept a cash valuation on fair appraisement. He then indulged his passion for theatrical sentimentality and declined the legacy beyond a few trinkets worth hardly a thousand dollars, I should say, which had belonged to his mother in her girlhood and in the first years of her married life. These Helen persuaded him to divide with her. Aurora at first insisted on having part of the jewels; but I wished to keep them all for the direct succession, and so induced her to take two hundred thousand dollars for her claim—agreeing not to subtract it from her share under my will. As she is a satisfactory child, I consider the promise binding.

I sold my old palace for two and a quarter millions to a *parvenu,* dazzled by an accidental half a dozen millions and impatient to show

them off before they vanished. While effecting the merger of my three railways, I made quadruple the balance of the cost of my new palace, by extinguishing one minority interest at forty-seven and creating another at one hundred and two. Given the capital, it is incomparably harder to build a palace than to make a score of millions. A very crude sort of man may get rich, but refinement and culture and taste and custom of wealth and a sense of the difference between dignity and ostentation are required to enable a man to demonstrate his fitness to possess wealth. I cannot expect my envious contemporaries publicly to admit that I have demonstrated my fitness. But—future generations will vindicate me in this as in other respects.

I kept a sharp look-out for a house for Walter—or, rather, for the hereditary principal heir of my line. Among the minority stock-

holders in one of my three railways was Edward Haverford, grandson of that Haverford who originated the secret freight rebate. By the very timid use of it natural in a beginner, and at a time when railway transportation was in its infancy, he had accumulated several millions. I doubt if he had any great amount of brains. I know that his grandson is as stupid as he is stingy. But he had a beautiful little palace in East Seventieth Street, near Fifth Avenue—an ideal home for a gentleman with expectations, the scion of a great family. In the "squeeze" incident to my extinguishing the minority existing before the merger, Haverford lost his fortune and was glad to dispose of his house to me for a million in cash. I established Walter and Natalie there and fixed their allowance from me at eight thousand a month. This is enough to enable them to live in easy circumstances with an occasional grant

from me—a happy compromise between an independence that would be dangerous and a dependence that would, in an heir-apparent, seem undignified.

I have decided not to take them in to live with me when Helen is married. I could not endure the daily espionage of those who are to succeed me. They could not conceal from *my* eyes their impatience for me to be gone. I shall keep them waiting many a year—seventy is not old for any man. For a man of my natural strength it is merely that advanced period of middle life when one must make his health his prime concern.

No, Helen shall stay on with me.

Her case is another instance of the folly of anticipating trouble. From the day she came to me with her confession that she had defied me by going to James at the crisis of his illness, I had been looking forward to a sharp

collision with her. Naturally, I assumed that the trouble would come over her marriage. I pictured her falling in love with some nobody with nothing and giving me great anxiety if not humiliation; and, while my wife had a certain amount of capacity in social matters, especially in the last two or three years of her life, I appreciated that she had many serious shortcomings. Intellectually, she was so far inferior to Helen that I could not but fear the worst. I had been, therefore, impatient for her to find a suitable husband for Helen, and so put an end to the peril of a severe blow to my pride and plans. As I had a peculiar affection for Helen, it would have cut me to the quick had she married beneath her.

I was luckier than I hoped. My wife disappointed me by rising to the occasion. Old Mrs. Kirkby, having accepted the alliance with my family, proceeded to make the best of

it. She took up my wife and Helen and put them in her own set—it seems to me the dullest in New York, if not in the world, but the most envied, and is beyond question composed of gentlefolk of the true patrician type. As my wife was careful that Helen should meet no one outside that set, and should go nowhere without herself or Mrs. Kirkby in watchful attendance, Helen was completely safeguarded against acquaintance, however slight, with any man of the wrong kind. So assiduous and careful was my wife—thanks, no doubt, to sagacious Mrs. Kirkby's teaching and example!—that she even never permitted Helen to go either to Walter's or to Aurora's when there were to be guests, without first making a study of the list. This was a highly necessary precaution, for both Natalie and Aurora, being safely married, admitted to their houses many persons who were all very well for pur-

poses of amusement, but not their social equals in the sense of eligibility to admission into an upper-class family with a position to maintain.

As everybody knows, the Kuypers are one of the best families in New York. When the original Kirkby was clerk in a Whitehall grocery before the Revolutionary War, a Kuyper kept the grocery—an eminently respectable business in those simple days. He had inherited it from his grandfather, and also a farm near where the Tombs prison now stands. The Kuypers have been people of means and of social and political and military and naval distinction for a century. About a year before my wife died she and Mrs. Kirkby fixed upon Delamotte Kuyper for Helen; and, although he was not rich, I approved their selection. With his comfortable income and what he will inherit and what I intend to leave Helen, they will be well established. In

addition to family and position and rank as the eldest son in the direct line, he has the advantages of being a handsome fellow, a graduate of Groton, a student at Harvard and at Oxford, and one of those men who do all sorts of gentlemen's pastimes surpassingly well. My wife was discreet in concealing her purpose from Helen—so discreet that, when the climax came, the poor child expected us to oppose the marriage. She had heard me and her mother comment often on Delamotte's comparatively small fortune and expectations—large for an old New York family, but a mere nothing among the fortunes of us newer and more splendid aristocrats. A yachting trip in the Mediterranean, and the business was done.

The yachting trip was my suggestion.

I don't recall ever having had a more agreeable sensation than when she came to me just after her return—poor Ridley was in the

room, I remember. She threw her arms round my neck and said: "You dear splendid old father! How happy you have made me. There never was a luckier girl than I!"

That added half a million to what I'm leaving her in my will.

What a pity, what a shame that she's a woman! She has my brains. She has my courage. She has a noble character—yes, I admire even her enthusiasms and sentimentalities. She has all the qualifications for the succession except one. There fate cheated me.

I have a sick feeling every time I think what might have happened had James remained in my family and been my principal heir. There's not the slightest doubt that he would have upset all my plans as soon as I was gone. He would have done his best to recreate for my family the conditions of the old America which made "three generations from

shirt sleeves to shirt sleeves" proverbial. How fortunate that he shouldered the blame for Walter's boyish folly! How fortunate that I did not learn it at a time when I might have been tempted to take him back! I was indeed born under a lucky star.

A lucky star! And yet what have I ever got out of it?—I, who have spent my life in toil and sweat without a moment's rest or happiness, sacrificing myself to my future generations. Sometimes I look at all these great prizes which I have drawn and hold, and I wonder whether they are of any value, after all. But, valuable or worthless, it was they or nothing, for what else is there beside wealth and power and position?

Nothing!

. . . . . .

It is curious how the human mind works—curious and terrible. Seven months after my

wife's death, when we had put aside the mourning and had resumed our ordinary course of life, I suddenly began to think of her as I was shaving. "I wonder what brought *her* into my mind?" said I to myself, and I decided that my face with the white stubble on its ridges had suggested my familiar black devil—"the end." But one day several months later, as I was driving from my office to lunch at a directors' meeting, I happened to notice the lower part of my face in the small mirror in the brougham.

My attention became riveted upon the line of my mouth, thin and firm and straight—with a queer sudden downward dip at the left corner.

"Strange!" said I to myself; "I never noticed *that* before."

Then I remembered I *had* noticed it before, *once* before and only once—the morn-

ing when I was shaving and thought of my wife and "the end." I had noticed it then and —had I noticed it no morning since because it had disappeared? Or had it been there all along, and had my mind seen it and hidden the fact from me? When one has a well-trained, obedient mind, it can and will hide from him almost anything he would find disagreeable or inconvenient to know.

I tried to straighten that line, but, no matter how I twisted my mouth, the drop at the left corner remained. I caught sight of my eyes in the mirror and found myself staring into the depth of a Something which had thus trapped me into letting it mock me. When my carriage stopped at the Postal Telegraph Building, I was so weak that I could hardly drag myself across the sidewalk and into the elevator. As I was shaving the next morning I dared not look myself in the eyes. But there

was the droop, and—yes—a droop of the left eyelid! I gave an involuntary cry—the razor cut me, and dropped to the floor. My valet rushed in. "I—I only cut myself," I stammered, apologetically. For the first time in my life I was afraid of a human being, from pure terror of what he might see and think.

How I have suffered in the three weeks that have passed since then! Day and night, moment by moment, almost second by second, I find myself listening for a footstep. Now I fancy I hear it, and the icy sweat bursts from every pore; now I realise that I only imagined those stealthy, shuffling, hideously creeping sounds coming along the floor toward me from behind, and I give a gasp of relief.

What a mockery it all is! What a fool's life I have led! When I am not listening, I am fiercely hating these people round me. They are listening, too — listening eagerly — yes,

even my own children. I can see from their furtive glances into my face that they, too, have seen the droop in the line that was straight, the growing weakness in the eye that never quailed. It is frightful, this being gently waited on and soothingly spoken to and patiently borne with—as his gaolers treat a man who is to be shot or hanged next sunrise.

Yet I dare not resent it. I can only cower and suffer.

My crown is slipping from me. No, worse —it is I that am slipping from it. It remains; I, its master, must go. I—its master? How it has tricked me! I have been its slave; it is weary of me; it is about to cast me off.

It has been years since any one has said "must" to me. I had forgotten what a hideous word it is. And if one cannot resent it, cannot resist it! All to whom I have said "must" are revenged.

Every night for a week I have cried like a child. I put my handkerchief under my head to prevent the tears from wilting my pillow and revealing my secret to them as they keep the death-watch on me. Last night I groaned so loudly that my valet rushed in, turned on the electric lights, and drew back the curtains of my bed. When he saw me blazing at him in fury, he shrank and stammered: "Oh, sir, I thought——"

"Get out!" I shrieked.

I knew only too well what he thought.

. . . . . .

On the following day—or was it the second day?—Gunderson Kuyper came to see me. Deaths in my family and in his, and other matters, chiefly—at least so I had imagined—my unwillingness to have Helen go away for a wedding trip, had delayed the marriage of my daughter and his son. Then, too, there had

been some attempt on the part of his lawyer to find out my intentions in the matter of an allowance for Helen. But, feeling that this was a true love match which ought not to be spoiled by any intrusion of the material and the business-like, I had waved the lawyer off with some vague politeness.

I was completely taken by surprise when, with an exceedingly small amount of hemming and hawing for so aristocratic a despiser of commercialism as Gunderson Kuyper, he flatly demanded a joint settlement of five millions on his son and Helen!

It was particularly important that I should not be excited. The doctors had warned me that rage would probably be fatal. But in spite of this I could not wholly conceal my agitation. "You will have to excuse me, Mr. Kuyper," said I. "You see what a nervous state I am in. Discussion about business

would be highly dangerous. I can only assure you that, as Helen is my favourite child, she and, of course, her husband will be amply provided for. I must beg you not to continue the subject."

"I understand. I am sincerely sorry." The oily scoundrel spoke in tones of the most delicate sympathy. "We will postpone the marriage until your health is such that you are able to discuss it." He rose and came toward me to take leave.

"Instead of quieting my agitation, you have aggravated it," I said. "These young people have their hearts set on each other—at least I have been led to believe that your son——"

"And you are right, my dear Galloway," he said—he patronises me, drops the "Mr." in addressing me, and makes me feel too distant with him to drop it in return. "But as my son

has less than fifteen thousand a year, he could not think of marriage with a woman brought up as your daughter has been—unless there were assurance of some further income. I am not in a position to make him an adequate allowance—I can only double his present income. He will, of course, inherit a considerable fortune at my death. But I feel it is only just that you should do your share toward properly establishing the new family."

"I shall, I shall," I said, feebly, trying to make him see how unfit I was for such a discussion. "Let them marry. Everything shall be looked after. Only leave me in peace. Do not disturb me with these mercenary——"

That word must have angered him, for his face whitened, and he said, with suppressed fury: "It is perfectly well known, Mr. Galloway, that you made no provision whatever for

your other children, and that you keep your son on a beggarly allowance, considering your fortune and the social station which you are struggling to maintain. You have given your elder daughter nothing. I speak plainly, sir, because your dealings with your children and with Mr. Bradish's daughter are matters of common gossip. I will permit no evasion, no screening behind illness. I must speak the only language you understand. It is a matter of indifference to us——"

"I had no idea the Kuypers were so—so thrifty," said I, myself in a fury at this vulgar and insulting tirade.

"As I was saying," he went on, "it is a matter of indifference to us whether my son marries your daughter or note. His mother and I consented only after he had made it plain to us that his happiness was involved. My consent was conditioned on your acting

the part of an honourable and considerate father."

"Our conceptions of a parent are evidently as wide apart as our conceptions of the feeling a young man should entertain toward a young woman he purposes to marry," said I. "Your demand for five millions is preposterous. The honour of marrying my daughter should be—shall be—sufficient for your son—if I permit the marriage to go on."

"Very well, sir. You may keep your daughter and your ill-got millions."

"Strange that ill-got wealth should have such a fascination for you!"

"Everything is purified by passing to innocent hands," he replied. "But—enough! I am ashamed that my temper should have degraded me to such a controversy with such a man. The longer we have had this matter under advisement the more nauseating it has

become. I might have known that nothing but humiliation would result from even considering an alliance with a family whose head is notorious throughout the length and breadth of this land for chicanery, for impudent dishonesty, for theft——"

I heard no more. I was now dimly conscious that his purpose throughout had been, after a perfunctory attempt to arrange a settlement, to provoke a quarrel that would make the marriage impossible. At his last words I felt a pain shoot from my brain throughout my body—a pain so frightful that I straightway lost consciousness.

At last my stealthy, shuffling, creeping enemy had stolen up behind me and had struck me down.

When I came to myself on the third day, Helen was there. "Poor child!" I said, "your dream is over, but——"

"No! No!" she protested.

"Yes—I know your heart was set on that young fellow."

"Everything is all right now that you are getting well," she replied, and would not let me say anything more.

In two weeks I was well enough to go about again as before. I found that Delamotte had defied his father and was only waiting for me to consent. For Helen's sake, I yielded. Why blame the boy? Why make my child wretched? Let them have the chance I never had. Or, did I have it and throw it away? No matter. To sacrifice them to revenge would be petty.

Petty! What is not petty to me, seated in front of The Great Fact?

I must rearrange my will properly to provide for Helen.

How small and repulsive it all is to me!—

all that has seemed so stupendous these forty years. I am worn out. If I have not the courage to die, still less have I the courage to go on—or the interest. I want rest.

They tell me—what they always tell a man in my straits. But they know better—and so do I!

Nor do I care.

. . . . . .

Too late! Too late! For now, not the poorest, greediest pedlar that cheats in rags for rags at the area-gate would change places with me.

Oh, vanity, how you have swindled me!

No doubt they think my mind is stunned. I have seen other men of my class stricken as I am. I have watched them in this frightful wait for the shaft they knew death had aimed and would not long delay. I know now why

their eyes were dull, why their ears seemed not to hear. I know what they were thinking about. For, hour after hour, I too——

(*Here the manuscript ends*)

POSTSCRIPT

On the second day after James Galloway's death, his eldest and outcast son called at the Galloway palace and asked for his brother Walter. Presently Walter, in dress and manner an ideal chief mourner and chief beneficiary, came down to him in the library. The dead man lay in a magnificent casket in the adjoining ball-room, which was half full of funeral flowers. They were scenting the whole house with stifling, suffocating perfume, sweet yet sickening.

"You came to see—father?" said Walter.

"No," replied James. "I do not wish to be reminded. I am trying to forgive him." Then he looked into his brother's eyes with the keen, frank glance that is one of his many

charms. "I've come to see you, to ask you what you intend to do about the will."

Walter's eyes shifted. "I don't understand you," he answered.

"I mean—do you intend to break it?"

There was a long silence. Walter's upper lip, in spite of his efforts to control it, was twitching nervously. At length he said: "He is gone. It is his will. It contains his—life ambition. I think it would be wrong not to respect it." He looked at his brother appealingly.

"Then I must warn you that, unless you break it and divide everything equally among his heirs, I shall make a contest."

"But you consented, Jim!" pleaded Walter, recovering from his stupor.

"Consented—to what?"

"To—to my staying—where I was."

"While he lived. I said nothing about

afterward. If you won't break the will, I shall. It will be easy enough. I can prove he made it in the belief that I had forged his name. I can prove—that—I didn't."

"But you know, Jim, he heard the truth years before he died."

James smiled cynically. "*How* do I know it?"

"I told you that mother told him on her death-bed."

"Would any jury believe you, or believe that I believed you?"

Walter flushed and looked indignantly at his brother. "You offered to shield me for what I did when I was a boy. I was younger than you—hardly more than a child. Now you want to punish me after making me accept your offer. It ain't like you, Jim!"

"More like father, ain't it?" said James,

sadly. "But—I can't do otherwise, Walt. I'm only helping you to do what's just—what's merely decent."

"You are trying to destroy our father's life-work!"

"No—not his *life*-work. I can't do that. I wish I could. I wish I could destroy it even in myself. No, all I can hope to do is to paralyse his dead hand—that awful hand he has plotted to keep on ruling and ruining with for generations. And I *will!*"

"You sha'n't do it, Jim Galloway!" exclaimed Walter, in a burst of fury. He stood and waved his arms in a gesture as weak as it was wild. "I won't let you. I won't be cheated. I won't! I *won't!*"

"Let's send for your wife and see what she thinks," said James.

Walter gasped and sank into his chair. "No!" he muttered. "This is between you and

me." Then, with tears in his eyes, he added: "You ought to be ashamed to take advantage of me. And after letting me alone and letting me get used to the idea! I didn't think you were mean and a coward."

"I admit I'm doing right in the wrong way —but it's the only way open to me. The will must be broken." James rose to go. "Don't let's quarrel, Walter. You know what's honest and right; I've told you what I shall do. Think it over. Talk it over with your wife. Either keep your equal share, and devote the rest to a memorial to mother—colleges, hospitals—anything—or else divide all equally among us four. Be sensible, Walt—think what a hell his money and his ideas made for himself and for the rest of us. If you get only your equal share, you'll have hard enough work keeping from not being like—him. Be sensible, Walt—and be decent!"

And he left the room and the house; and a huge wave of that suffocating-sweet perfume of funeral flowers poured out through the opened street-door after him as if to overwhelm him—like subtle hate on stealthy murder bent.

That same afternoon the will was opened. There were legacies of ten millions to Walter and to Aurora, and of two millions to James's children. The rest of the estate, seventy millions, was left unconditionally—to Helen. The will was just one month old.

Walter was beaten in a long contest to have it set aside, and have the estate equally divided among the heirs. The lawyers got five millions. When Helen was finally victorious, she devoted all, except eight millions for James and ten millions for Delamotte and herself, to the magnificent endowment of her father's various public enterprises. The huge palace

she made over into the "James Galloway Memorial Museum of Art."

"I only carried out his real will," she said, "for he was one of the noblest men that ever lived—and nobody understood him but me."

THE END

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